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ABSTRACT

This manual represents the viewpoint, experience, and principles and practices that guide positive and effective programs for women at the Career and Life Counseling Center at Bergen Tech (New Jersey). Chapter I provides an overview and history of women's educational and economic issues. Chapter II addresses the social and economic consequences of women's increased labor force participation. Chapter III contains profiles of selected women who seized available opportunities, asserted will and competence, and benefited from center services. Chapter IV, on humanizing welfare, offers a positive look at the women on welfare and their children. It advocates a menu of counseling principles, programs, and vocational training that would reform welfare and educate and train most women on public assistance into self-sufficiency. Counseling themes--issues, typical conflicts, and behavior binds--that are frequently present and in need of attention are discussed. Other topics include the following: counseling principles, programs, and practices; career counseling themes, approaches, and programs; assessment; networking; advisory councils; and basic skills and vocational training. Chapter V discusses the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Act. Chapter VI makes policy recommendations, including integration of counseling and a menu for success into welfare reform programs. Twelve references are listed. (YLB)

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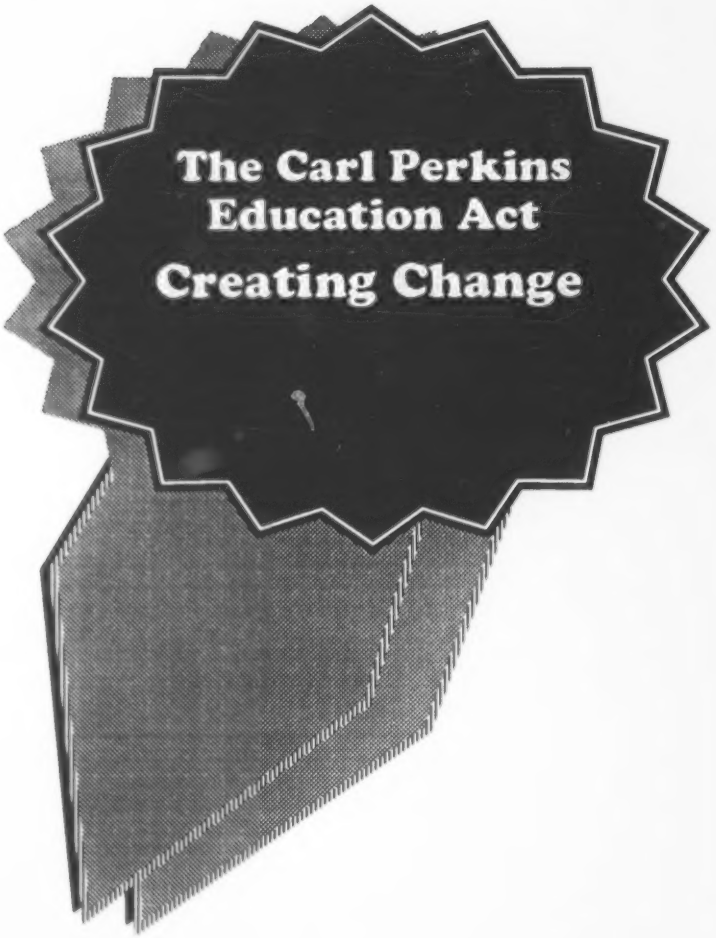

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PROFILES OF TRANSFORMATION:
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PROFILES OF TRANSFORMATION:
HOW THE CARL PERKINS ACT CREATES CHANGE

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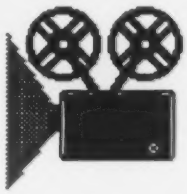
ESTABLISHING PERSPECTIVE: AN OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

Since the mid-sixties, women have been at the center of major social transformation. Their societal roles have become complex, and, for many, economically burdensome. To women's traditional family responsibilities has been added that of primary wage-earner. Necessity forces unprecedented numbers of women into the labor market either to support a family on her own, or to join a spouse in providing sufficiently for family, or, as a single woman, to maintain herself.



Meanwhile soaring divorce rates (in 1920, 12% of marriages ended in divorce; in the 80's, over 50%!), and shifting familial patterns have created new populations of women, divorced or widowed, ("displaced homemakers") who, at a most vulnerable time in their life-cycle, become economically devastated. ***"To be counting out pennies from my piggy bank, at this time in my life, using food stamps at the grocery store, is so terrible, so demeaning."***

To complicate this transition, discrimination hurts women. Pay inequity, occupational segregation, sexual harassment, amongst other institutional and cultural factors, keep women in a disadvantaged place.

In response to widespread changes and inequities, a range of activities and policies emerged. The Civil Rights and the Women's Movements of the 60's and 70's created a climate of social awareness, and spurred a politic and policies to address the issues of women and minorities, and to compensate for discrimination. *Affirmative Action* denotes that women and other disadvantaged groups require special resources simply to have a "fair break," educationally and economically.

Legislatively, affirmative action took the form of many acts and bills to encourage, and fund projects to redress the effects of disadvantage, and promote positive changes for women and other special populations.

DON'T MOURN, ORGANIZE

Grass Roots movements such as that started by Laurie Shield and Tish Sommers spread across the country in the late 70's, early 80's. Local, then regional, and finally a National Displaced Homemaker Network, coalesced. Emphasis on employment and economic issues generated the energy and direction of Wider Opportunities For Women, NOW, and Trades Womens' Associations along with numerous local and regional organizations.

EDUCATION

Title IX highlighted specific new directions in education for girls and women, particularly in higher education. And the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act became a major vehicle for economic and educational equity for the majority of working women, non-professionals, and non-college degree individuals.

JOBS

The nation's primary employment and training system, CETA (1973), was replaced with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) in 1982, and while actual dollars were increased, many of the more client-centered and progressive elements of CETA were dropped, local politics became primary shapers of policy, and the servicing of special groups of women became more problematic than it had been in CETA, — despite their growing numbers, and increased economic needs.

ONCE AGAIN, WELFARE REFORM

No one, least of all advocates, disagrees with the goal of helping women be self-supporting. Women on public assistance represent a most vulnerable segment of the adult female population, and do need resources to transition themselves to self-sufficiency. However, welfare reform is often built on distorted or uninformed ideas about women. Plans for reform reflect this weak foundation in many ways including poor planning, ill-conceived strategies and organizational systems for delivery of "reform." In the end, they fail .

Women on welfare at this point in our economic history dramatize the changing roles of women in the economy: their history of disadvantage requires redress if they are to become self-sufficient contributors to the economy at large. In this context, current welfare reform efforts reflect poorly on our collective ability to respond wisely to the challenge of shifting demographics and a changing economy.

In summation the 60's focused attention on special populations, and on how education, along with employment and training systems, could lift disadvantaged groups out of poverty. The 80's made manifest the dramatic impact of technological advance on economics and the labor market. The introduction of the personal computer provided a tangible symbol. It seemed to trigger national awareness of the accelerating and far-reaching changes which modern technology, the computer, telecommunications have upon the workforce. Just as early in the century the shift from agriculture to an industrial-based economy revolutionized the economy, and catalyzed massive social and political change, so too the rise of modern technology is spurring major social transformation.

There is of course much debate on the nature and the scope of this transformation. For some analysts, upskilling is the primary factor, and they accordingly raise the spectre of highly skilled jobs going unfilled because of the dismal educational attainments of American youth. Others focus on the predominance of lower skill level jobs in the service sector, and downplay the degree of upskilling.

The debate is made all the more difficult because technology changes so quickly. It eludes scientific predictability. There are nonetheless some general and clear trends which seem beyond serious dispute: one, that many jobs, in high demand and commanding a decent family wage, are upskilled, and do require higher levels of cognitive functioning.

Two, there is consensus that the characteristics of productive employees have become more intricate, that new innovations require employees who command critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills such as the ability to take initiative and to evaluate results. Coupled with this higher order thinking are characteristics and qualities, less tangible, less measurable. These include the ability to work cooperatively in a team, the ability to work with diverse populations, and the ability to be flexible and adaptable. Many policies and initiatives, designed to help women and special populations, fail, or fall far short of their goals.

EQUITY CENTERS: STAYING ALIVE

SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS, TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTIONS: THE SKILLS GAP

Two parallels social and economic forces became apparant in the 80's, and together defined the national economic challenge. The Hudson Institute report, *Workforce 2000* has become most popular, indeed a synonym for a new series of elements at the center of our economic well-being. In brief, the report highlights that the labor market as we approach the year 2000 is becoming increasingly non-traditional. Groups, historically disadvantaged and non-mainstream, primarily women and minorities including limited English proficient immigrants, for the first time in history will become the primary labor pool for the national economy.

Thus at a time when technology requires a higher skilled, better prepared workforce, business faces a population which has been discouraged, or prevented from obtaining such higher level skills and personal characteristics. This in a nutshell constitutes the "skills gap" christened by former Secretary of Labor, Elizabeth Dole. There are of course many more complexities to this picture—including the generational consequences of the feminization of poverty on youth rising to fill vital new positions in the economy.

And there are divergent theories about the real and long lasting impact of technology. However, the concept of skills gap is conceptually clear and pedagogically sound enough to guide our presentation.

This manual implies one further position which deep-rooted and pervasive gender-bias continue to obscure to the detriment of our nation. Women and girls, prototypes of special populations, in addition the majority of the new demographic shift and the problems it poses, constitute the core of the challenge for a society which must change in productive and positive directions.

It is astounding, given the primacy of women's educational issues and the loss of human resources predicated on wide-spread discrimination and failure to respond to the miseducation of females, that the flurry of educational reform and studies fails to focus on this topic. From a *Nation at Risk* to the numerous commissioned studies of vocational education and education at large, issues of sex equity remain marginal if not invisible. It is the contention of our Center's staff that this distorted and ill-conceived bias on the part of educators and reformers stymies their intention to improve education, and in the larger scene, continues to impede real positive and productive change in all realms—educational, social, economic and political.

PROGRAMS AND PROBLEMS

For all that activities, policy innovations, and commitment of resources do exist, and do target women as single parents, displaced homemakers, teens, unfortunately they provide very little money. And the challenge of facilitating women's economic progress poses very many obstacles. Multiple life circumstances stand in the way of many women's ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Some of these obstacles are results of damaging backgrounds such as dysfunctional families, poor educational preparation, low self-esteem, and the legacies of abusive family and marital relationships. A good many of the obstacles are institutional, and these, for women, involve the lack of available and affordable child care, the lack of a national health care system, and a poor public transportation system. Added to this are socialization patterns, coupled with employment and training discrimination, which channel women into low paying occupational fields, and which *keep them down* with a well documented system of pay inequity and discrimination. Many policies and initiatives, designed to help women and special populations, fail, or fall far short of their goals. The reasons are attributable both to inadequacy of funding and resources, but, equally as serious, to ill-conceived and misguided rules, regulations, and policies which prove to be self-defeating, -- and lacking in humanity.

This manual purports to represent the viewpoint, the experience, and the principles and practices which guide positive and effective programs for women and special populations. The Career and Life Counseling Center at Bergen Tech is one of many programs which have grown out of the of social change articulated above, and which, through the practice of working with women, have evolved in understanding and in our abilities to deliver programs and resources capable of effecting positive life changes for at-risk women.

Undertaking this meaningful work is rewarding, but fraught with difficulties. We speak for many, who would describe the work of equity advocates as *embattlement*. Most of us fledgling programs, innovating in new programmatic areas, socially, educationally, and in terms of employment and training initiatives, we require maximum support to enable our efforts.

Yet the reality is different. We face the threat of budget cuts constantly; much of our energies are required to constantly cultivate new funding sources, and to maintain our own against the ever present threat of cutbacks, as well as thrive despite the hostility or indifference of the institutions we work in and with.

The federal, state, and local funded programs must meet often ludicrous performance standards, and hence our energies and time go to the game of playing with unrealistic numbers, with unrealistic expectations, and with bureaucratic regulations that sap our energies. In our efforts to facilitate our clients we frequently run into frustrating road blocks. These come in the form of restrictions to services, Byzantine rules and regulations, and sometimes staff of agencies and governmental offices who are at worse inimicable to the goals of our clients, or at best simply unsympathetic.They become impediments, where they could be facilitators.

OUR MISSION, OUR MESSAGE

With all of this, still, we provide a meaningful and effective service. We don't always succeed. The problems prove too vast, and the restrictions too paralyzing, for the best of our efforts.

In showcasing the successes in this manual, we do not claim to be miracle workers. We do, however, claim to point in the direction of how much good could be accomplished with more caring, with intelligence, and with some greater commitment to replace deadening bureaucracy, and cynicism, with workable programs.

Miracle at its root means "great transformation." We hope this manual contributes to bringing about more individual miracles: people who undergo great personal change; women who develop their potential, and who thereby secure the dignity of providing for themselves and for their families.

Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income, and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property(United Nations, 1980).

ECONOMIC PROLOGUE: WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Change characterizes our time, socially and economically. Women are in many ways at the heart of this flux. Their responsibilities as family center, mother and wife, have long been pivotal to our economy. A century ago, except for the very poor and the well-to-do, it would be correct to say that "men had careers; women married."

In the last 100 years things have altered. Women's sphere of responsibility has expanded. Their representation in the labor market has soared. Women are almost 50% of the workforce:

1890	1900	1940	1960	1972	1989	2000
15.2%	20%	29%	33%	39%	45%	47%

By the year 2000, women will comprise two-thirds of all new entrants, and will be, throughout the 90's, the largest growth segment in the labor market. Along with minority males, women are the major determinant of our national economic destiny.

WHY THE CHANGES:

Increased labor force participation is part of a much larger field of social and economic forces. Social movements for equality, and our culture's emphasis on self-fulfillment, for instance, have influenced women's new relationship to the economy.

Yet by far the most important factor is sheer necessity. Women must work.

Single women must support themselves.

The majority of married women must support their families to keep them out of poverty (most {55%} are married to men who earn less than $15,000 a year).

Women who are divorced, separated or widowed comprise the growing phenomenon of female head-of-household families and displaced homemakers, who are sole caretakers and breadwinners.

FOCUSING ON THE DETAILS: *WHO ARE THEY?*

Growing numbers of females assuming full responsibility for their families are a significant constituency of the new labor market. Single parents from ethnic and racial groups have sharply increased during the last two decades.

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"In the general population, after divorce, a man's standard of living rises 42%; his average former wife's drops by 73%."

SINGLE FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES IN THE U.S.

20% of all American families are headed by women

25% of Hispanic families are headed by women

50% of Black families are headed by a woman

FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY

The poverty rate of single parent households dramatizes the economic drive propelling women into the workforce. This high rate is the central feature of the "feminization of poverty." Women and children are the majority of the poor.

There are 7 times as many single mothers as single fathers.

75% of Black female heads of household live below poverty.

3.2 million women

Over 50% of female heads of household live below poverty.

49% of Hispanic heads of household live below poverty and 42% of White female heads live below poverty.

1.2 million children

3.5 million children

The Poverty Line

Family of	
1	6,620
2	8,880
3	11,140
4	13,400

The mothers earn an average of $12,000 a year: the fathers earn an average of $24,000 a year.

7.9 million children are living in conditions of deprivation.

TEEN MOTHERS

The most vulnerable population is the teen mothers. And there are large numbers in our country. Amongst all industrialized nations, the United States has the highest incidence of teenage pregnancy: every day, **40** teens give birth to their **3rd** child.

Currently there are 600,000 teen mothers. Most of these are single (55%). With a divorce rate of over 50%, one can reasonably project that at least 50-60% of the remaining 45% will become separated or divorced with their children to support on their own.

Nearly 65% of young mothers under 14, and 50% of those 15-19 years old do not complete high school.

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A grim forecast. Clearly most teen mothers are headed for public assistance, or for life at the poverty line. Given their vulnerable situations, their youth, their lack of schooling, their female status, and their child care burdens, it follows that the younger a woman becomes a mother, the more likely she will experience poverty. Further, teen mothers forced onto public assistance are ten times more likely to remain on welfare for over 8-10 years (in contrast to the average 1-2 years).

INEQUITY AND THE HARDEST HIT

Despite important advances, women still experience bias and discrimination barring their way to self-sufficiency. The gains they have undeniably made in the last 20 years have been mainly won by middle and upper-middle class women at the professional and managerial levels in the economy.

However the majority of women have not significantly gained. Non-professional, largely poor or working class women are more numerous, and their situations more representative of women's status:

> In 1984, 82% of working women claimed less than 4 years of college.
>
> 80% of working women are non-professionals, blue collar, technical, or service providers.

All women experience wage discrimination, but the disadvantaged women and their children are most hurt by this inequity. The pattern is unequivocal; the facts graphic:

WORKERS BY RACE AND SEX	MEDIAN EARNINGS	PERCENTAGE OF WHITE MALE EARNINGS
White men	$27,228	100%
Black men	$20,371	74.8%
Hispanic men	$17,851	65.6%
White women	$17,819	65.4%
Black women	$16,538	60.7%
Hispanic women	$14,845	54.5%

(Thanks to the National Commission on Working Women, Wider Opportunities for Women. Women and Work, Washington, D.C., March 1990)

DISPARITIES FROM THE FLOOR LEVEL TO THE TOP

- Women are still earning on an average of only $.60 to $.65 for every dollar earned by their male counterparts.
- Among single parents the average drops to only 50%
- At the very top of the economic pinnacle the gap widens; women who have reached the so-called "glass ceiling" of the corporate world earn only 42% of what their male cohorts at the top earn.

Over 60% of poor adults are female. Over 80% of the poor are women and children: How are we to understand this?

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

- One of the critical economic target areas is occupational segregation. A variety of studies have estimated that an astounding 30-40% of wage disparity separating men and women, and serving to maintain women in poverty, is the occupational segregation of women to largely female, low paying and low status employment areas.

- Recent data highlights that only 9% of working women are in non-traditional employment (defined as fields comprised of less than 25% of female participation). For our specific population of non-professional working women, the limitation is more severe. A full 86% of non-professional working women are concentrated in only four employment fields, — clerical, retail sales, health, and technical.

- Forty percent (40%) of all women are in only ten occupations: secretary, retail sales, bookkeeper, household worker, waitress, typist, cashier, seamstress, nurse, and elementary school teacher.

- Seventy percent (70%) are in three occupational groups — clerical, service, and technical and professional. ***The severe restriction of this pattern is highlighted by the realization that there are over 420 occupational groups.***

There are many varying perspectives from which to view this phenomena. From an advocate's point of view, it is a serious impediment to economic equity for women, therefore it constitutes an area which needs strategic attention.

TOWARDS WORKFORCE 2000: BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND WOMEN'S ROLE
DANGER SIGNS

A major factor accounting for the rise of women's numbers in the labor force is the law of supply and demand. Business and industry require women to fill roles in the economy. However, numbers, in and of themselves, are not an index of improved status. For while business and industry encourage and provide incentive for women to enter the labor market, in conjunction with other cultural forces, this can also have its negative effect.

Indeed there are many danger signs for women. Women, for example, are working more, and for less. Since 1970, the number of women who must work two jobs has soared sharply from a 2% figure in 1970 to a 5.9% figure in 1980. Another danger is in the industry momentum. It is estimated that six out of ten of the fastest growing new employment areas are traditionally female, lower paying, lower status jobs in service industries. In the absence of an intervening force, women will be channeled to fill the lower, worst paying spheres within a changing economy.

OPPORTUNITIES

Contrarily, there are factors which would suggest that it is in the best interest of all to tap the potential of women. First there is the sheer force of numbers; that women will comprise two-thirds of all new entrants into the labor market by the year 2000 suggests it is critical to train and educate women to fill the new technologically demanding goals required of a healthy economy.

Another major impact of technology is in the altered definitions of employee skills and abilities. A new profile of worker key to our economic well being. Business and industry require flexibility, cooperation, the ability to communicate and to problem solve. Many of these are skills embedded in female socialization. And women would readily develop into the employees of a productive workforce.

NON-TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

The revolution in technology and its powerful impact upon the economy makes for an optimistic encouragement of women into non-traditional areas. New jobs requiring technical skills and expertise are relatively open to women. In contrast to blue collar jobs, dominated by unions and old boy networks, the technological fields are relatively free from these entrenched interests, and more open to employing and rewarding those who can do the job, regardless of their race or gender.

SUMMATION: A VISION OF TRANSFORMATION

This manual focuses on a microdimension. For practical purposes of analysis, it treats training and educational concerns in relative isolation from a matrix of cultural and political elements actually inseparable from understanding, or adequately addressing, the complexities of women's economic roles in the labor market and in the society.

The high incidence of poverty, the indisputable wage disparity, and occupational segregation, are the products of a network of political, social, and cultural dynamics.

The myth that women work for pin money would hopefully dissolve before facts. Other meanings should arise (and equally hopefully) serve to motivate social intervention to ameliorate the conditions of hardship for such large numbers of women and children — circumstances creating a culture of poverty which poisons individuals and communities, and afflicts the next generation.

The healing of a human collective which devalues women and children requires movement and change on many fronts,—legislative, political, familial and social, psychological and economic. There are steps that can be taken by institutions of education, and the national system of employment and training which, while in and of themselves are not panaceas, do constitute an important contribution to the overall goal of improving the status of women's lives.

There is thus an implicit macrodimension at the heart of this manual. It is the question of our society's and our culture's values, both moral and spiritual; it is reflected in the evaluation of political and economic priorities; it entails the issue of justice, of equity and inequity, and of the consequences of the choices we make in these regards.

Correspondingly, in a broader sense, a precondition and a consequence both of a society invested in improving the lives of women and children, is radical change in political and economic priorities; a spiritual and moral transformation of basic values; a choice for life, for justice, for health which, organically, would reverberate throughout the social body,—shaking us collectively to our senses.

THE HEALTH OF A SOCIETY IS DETERMINED BY THE POSITION OF WOMEN

...AND LOVE FOR THE GENERATIONS TO FOLLOW

PROFILES OF TRANSFORMATION

The women here are a selection from hundreds who have seized available opportunities, asserted and demonstrated will and competence, and benefited from the capabilities and caring of their counselors and instructors at the Career and Life Counseling Center.

People are often described in columns of numbers, in statistical ranges, and in terms of cost- effectiveness.

These profiles provide evaluation on a human scale. They offer a "feel" for a person. A sense of the burdens of hardship, an appreciation for the ordinary heroism of daily life, and, for the preciousness, the importance, and the effectiveness of programs wisely designed to respect and help people respect themselves and obtain control over their own lives.

Academic literature and professional research generally neglect women. We rarely hear their voices, or see their lives from their own viewpoint. These profiles lift a curtain, introduce and sketch, and, we hope, appropriately represent an important group of women who are so invisible in mainstream scholarship.

Each of these women has endured, braved challenges, and given herself, with courage and determination, to the dynamic process in which she has grown personally, socially, and economically.

These women, and the hundreds more they represent in our locality alone, demonstrate the huge benefits gleaned from the relatively small amount of dollars that have been invested in improving the quality of life for women and their children.

These profiles illustrate the practices and principles this manual recommends. They demonstrate how a menu of counseling, relevant support services, basic academics, and a vocational training system provides a powerful combination to really help women and other special populations to obtain economic self-sufficiency, — and all of the benefits which accrue to themselves, their families, and their communities.

Here, then, is a gallery of strong and capable women:

**"You have a baby.
You feel scared and alone.
I think I lost my mind a few times."**

When Mary Olsen came to the Career and Life Counseling Center she was a 20 year old single parent with a six month old daughter. A welfare recipient and part-time cashier, she was searching for a way out of dependence on others, both financial and emotional.

No one can describe her mindset at the time better than she: **"You have a baby. You feel scared and alone...I think I lost my mind a few times...You can't lay around anymore. You have to set goals."**

Mary finally took the advice of her mother, who had repeatedly encouraged her to further her education. With a referral from her welfare worker, Mary sought counseling at Career and Life Counseling Center.

Denise DiMicelli, senior staffer at the Center, provided testing and on-going counseling to guide Mary. Mary was on her way. Acting on the Center's encouragement of non-traditional choices, Denise introduced Mary to Computer Aided Design and Manufacturing.

With funding assistance from PIC and REACH, Mary enrolled in CAD/CAM. She graduated with honors, and was named "Non-Traditional/Single Parent of the Year" by the N.J. Department of Vocational Education.

After only two weeks on her first job, she gave notice that she would be leaving the company for a better offer. She promptly received a $3000 increase. Not only has she received another increase since then, but she has the satisfaction of knowing she holds a good paying job she enjoys; her three year old daughter is happily settled in school; and her family is proud as can be.

Non-Traditional Training Instructor, Role Model, Laura Frazer, teaches blueprint reading.

Married at 19, Robyn Good became a mother of two children. Problems arose. Robyn wanted to go to school to develop skills. Her husband resisted. Robyn's "idealistic dream" of marriage dissolved. Her husband became involved, and fathered a daughter with another woman. Their marriage ended.

Robyn and her two children were on welfare. She had tried to work and maintained a part-time job. But it was simply not enough to make ends meet. Robin needed welfare to supplement her small salary.

Without a high school diploma she qualified for only unskilled low paying jobs. Emotionally she was hurting with regrets over having quit high school. Her dream of attending college was far beyond her reach. She saw only struggle to make ends meet and no possibilities for improving her life.

When the REACH program came into effect, Robyn at age 28 was one of its first participants. This led her into the Life Skills program, and doors began to open. It was July, 1988. This time, her ambition drove her to obtain a GED.

The Life Skills program provided her counseling and encouraged her to pursue a technical career. The counseling opened her eyes to a new field, Computer Aided Design and Manufacturing. By September Robyn was officially enrolled in the ten month CAD/CAM program.

Robyn found counselor, Patty Scillia (left).

The following months presented numerous hardships. Robyn's son was hospitalized during her course work. She had to deal with the trauma and daily difficulties of his prolonged hospitalization. Upon his release, Robyn had big child care problems. With the support of her counselor and Life Skills instructor, Patty Scillia, Robyn got the help and understanding to overcome these obstacles.

She graduated from CAD/CAM the following July with honors. She landed an excellent job with an architectural firm where she produces electronic and mechanized schematics. Her two boys, now aged five and nine, are supported by their mother who earns four times as much in her entry level job as she did in her years of unskilled work.

Robyn attributes much of her success to the counselors and staff at Bergen Tech who helped her realize what was already inside her. It was this flowering of her potential that makes Robyn conclude that the most important impact of her education was to make her **"realize that I am a human being."**

"Es un sueño hecho realidad, un milagro. Tan solo me siento mal de no haber tenido la oportunidad de trabajar en una oficina años atrás."

Lucy Lopez, at 64 years of age was a seamstress for over twenty years. When her company went out of business, she became unemployed. A robust and energetic woman, Lucy immediately began a search for another job. While job searching, Lucy was injured in an automobile accident.

While recovering, Lucy read about the Career & Life Counseling Center, and Career Counselor, Denise DiMicelli assessed and supported her life transition. Lucy had a strong desire to return to work, and was reluctant to accept retirement and isolation at home. Lucy expressed a willingness and interest in training for a new career, and learned through career counseling that office work appealed to her.

Following a visit to the Integrated Office Systems class at Bergen Tech, Lucy left the Center with a strategic referral to the Private Industry Council. She learned that as a dislocated worker, she was eligible for tuition assistance.

Lucy enrolled in IOS in March of '89, and she acquired valuable skills in filing, English, typing, and word processing. In addition, an hour a day was spent strengthening her communication skills through assertiveness training .

Lucy completed her training in July and joined the Career and Life Counseling Center as a bilingual office assistant in September. When asked to define the value of her training, Lucy answers **"It's a dream come true — a miracle. I only regret I didn't have the opportunity to work in an office years ago."**

FROM NO PLACE TO TURN,— TO CORPORATE SALES

With a high school degree, but without marketable skills, after her divorce Karen found the best way she could. She took a waitressing job to support her two young children.

The job enabled her to just get by. What she thought was temporary dragged on. Months became years and her children grew into their teen years. Karen was discouraged by her inability to raise her standard of living. She could barely provide necessities, and felt stymied and frustrated.

Karen felt she **"had no place to turn."** Then she learned of a counseling program. With hindsight Karen describes her career exploration class, facilitated by the Center's Director, Dr. Rena Grasso, as a turning point in her life.

With help from the counseling process and encouragement from her counselor, Karen enrolled in a community college where she maintained a 4.0 average. Nonetheless, her academic success was not sufficient for a livable wage.

Once again, with the help of counseling, Karen enrolled in a newly developed program, the Automated Office Systems Program at Bergen Tech. The vocational training program had been designed by the Career and Life Counseling Center specifically with returning women in mind.

Only four months through the program, Karen was offered a good job, and soon thereafter promoted into a sales position. Within a few short months, Karen was again promoted to Eastern Regional Sales Administrator -- a position giving her responsibility for contracts, financial analysis, forecasting, and corporate reporting for nine sales districts.

Karen attributes her success to her own determination and to her counselors' **"support, encouragement, and direction."** Karen vividly recalls worrying and struggling and the terrible taste of discouragement and hopelessness, — the Christmases without presents for her children. Today her energies focus positively on both the challenges and the rewards of her own accomplishments raising her children well, her achievements at work, and her personal and professional life.

Counselor, Diane Scarangella (left), and Center Director, Dr. Rena Grasso, discuss concerns with women in vocational training.

Lillian Marrero is qualified to give advice to single parents: **"Never give up no matter how hard things get. The tougher things get, the harder you fight. Set your goals—one at a time—and work your way up."** And that is exactly what Lillian has done.

She recalls bottoming out: **"For 18 years I was physically and emotionally abused by my husband. Low self-esteem was one of my biggest obstacles"** she relates. **"I reached the point where I started believing I wasn't worth anything."**

With no education, job skills or money—and three children to care for—she was on the verge of eviction from her apartment. Desperate, she reached out for help.

Through the REACH program, Lillian participated in Life Skills class. After extensive career exploration and counseling with Diane Scarangella, Lillian decided on the CAD/CAM training. **"At first, I was disoriented. I had no idea what training was available, what I'd like to do or what I'd be good at. Through the help I received at the Center, I was able to make a decision. Without this help I would never have had the courage to select CAD/CAM training."**

With the help of a special project counselor at the Center, Lillian completed a long term plan of action which enabled her to get rental assistance. She enrolled in and completed GED studies. A big hurdle was overcome, and she had taken important steps.

Lillian applied for CAD/CAM training, and was accepted. As her progress continued, her confidence grew. **"My experience in training has made me feel good about myself. It gave me confidence to keep setting higher goals."** She achieved a high level of mastery and developed solidly marketable skills. She completed the training, second in her class.

With three children between the ages of six and eighteen, Lillian connects her achievement to her childrens' well-being:. **"My example has made my daughter see the importance of school—that a woman can be strong and financially independent if she wants to," she states. "In many ways, my children have learned to value themselves more as a result of the confidence I have gained from my experiences in counseling and training."**

A TEEN MOTHER MAKES IT

"Before I entered the Integrated Office Systems program at Bergen Tech, I was dependent on everyone else. I had no self-confidence and was very unsure of what I wanted to do with my life. I just felt like the world owed me a lot because I was throuh a lot with my husband...and with my daughter, who is severely asthmatic."

At 22 years of age, Marjorie Tuminaro separated from her husband and faced the future as a single mother of a one year old son and three year old daughter. **"It was a tough situation,"** she noted, **"being single, alone, on your own for the first time, and being responsible for two small children."**

Although she **"didn't want to get anything from welfare,"** with no income, a poor educational background, and few marketable skills, Marjorie was forced to turn to welfare for assistance. **"It's a shame,"** she states, **"that people have to go to welfare if they are in a divorce situation or they are having problems. You feel depressed being on welfare, you know? You don't feel good about yourself knowing you are being supported by taxpayers."** **Her solution: "There has to be more education."**

With this in mind, Marjorie followed a welfare worker's recommendation, and sought assistance from the Career & Life Counseling Center. **"I spoke to a counselor. She told me about the different services the Center provided, helped me find information on careers and training, and helped me choose what I wanted to do...she helped me find a way out of my situation. It was one of the best moves I ever made in my life."**

As a single parent, Marjorie was eligible for financial assistance provided by funding from the Carl Perkins Act. **"The Center made it possible for me to begin the training program I had chosen. They helped me with child care, school tuition, travel money to go to school, and also with the support of having people to talk to when you needed somebody."**

Having counselors and **"other women that were facing the same childhood, the same problems"** to talk to while she attended training were factors Marjorie identified as critical to her success in training.

The differences she observed between her experiences in high school and in an adult equity program were also critical: **"The adult training program was a lot more supportive and understanding. Everyone was considered equal. The teachers were wonderful and I really learned a lot, not only academically but how to deal with everyday life and challenges. I learned to push myself when I really didn't want to. In a way that gave me the confidence now that I am working, to handle the every day stresses of working full-time and being a mother."**

Being able to take on a challenge at work is particularly important to Marjorie in her secretarial job, a job in which she is constantly asked to do things new to her. **"In one month,"** she reports, **"I've picked up on accounts receivable and billing, and learned two software packages on the computer...and I'm doing this right. Last week, I did 100 invoices in one day, and I didn't make one mistake. My boss feels confident letting me run the office when everyone else is out. He knows that when something needs to be done, I can handle it...rationally, as an adult. Knowing that I am a valuable asset to my company makes me feel good, and that is the key to real success."**

Being back in school is **"a dream come true"** said 22 year old Carol, mother of 2 year old Tyrone, and student in Women Working Technical. **"Before I started this program I was sitting at home depressed, doing nothing, feeling like nothing, worrying about 'me' and my troubles...feeling like I was going crazy or something."**

Worrying was about her mother's drinking, about paying the rent, cleaning the house, being too dependent on her boyfriend and feeling unable to say "no" to him, or to her mother.

Carol met her boyfriend when she began work as a cleaning person in the County Hospital after high school graduation. **"I was 18 when I started going out with my boyfriend and I was a pushover."**

Her training experiences and the anticipation of a good job have contributed to the changes she observes in herself. **"I don't need him. When he tells me he's getting paid, I tell him I'm gonna get paid soon too. Now if I do something, it is for me, before it was for him."**

Things are different now: **"even though I'm not finished, being in school has changed my life a lot. Now that I'm in school I just feel proud."**

Carol also credits the opportunity to talk out her problems with a counselor as contributing to her growth and independence. **"I never talked to anyone about my problems, I just kept things bottled up inside my head"** Her relationship with her mother was one of these things. **"When I became pregnant,"** she recalls, **"my mother used to drink and put me out — all kinds of weather, day or night. She'd call me names and everything. I never realized how much it bothered me and kept me from concentrating on school work until I talked with my counselor at the Career & Life Counseling Center about it. I know she was really listening and that she understood. It helped talking to her cause it made me cry...and then it made me feel better."**

When her son was almost 2 years old, Carol received a welfare newsletter that changed her life. **"I saw in the welfare paper that Bergen Tech had training so I asked my REACH worker about it."** Carol went through the REACH program and participated in Life Skills. With the help of her Life skills counselor, she explored different types of careers and training.

Bert Stigliano, Women Working Technical Instructor, and Carol Witherspoon ponder an electronic demonstration.

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"I was confused when I went to Life Skills, there were so many things I wanted to do. The projects we did in class helped us to think about what really fit us, so by the time I finished Life Skills I had narrowed my choices to one or two different things."

Carol chose Women Working Technical, because: **"I like working with my hands and trying to figure things out. Even when I was in high school I see one of the guys fix some machine and I was like 'wow! I think I would like to do something like that.'"**

Like many women returning to school, Carol had difficulty with math, **"I know I failed the math admissions test,"** she states. **"I failed not because I didn't know math but because I forgot what I knew. Laura, the head of Women Working Technical, respected this. She knew I needed brushing up, so she loaned me a math book. I know I passed the first math test I took after I started the program because Laura loaned me that book."**

Laura's respect helped her enter the program and pass the test required for her to receive tuition assistance from the Private Industry Council. Now that she is in class, her teachers push her to achieve. As Carol observes, **"she tells me 'you can do it, Carol' and that makes me push to prove to myself that I can do it."**

The communications/counseling group built into the Women Working Technical curriculum also helps Carol and her classmates to work through the many problems that can interfere with success in training. **"In our communications group we sit down and talk about anything that needs improvement, teachers, math, personal problems like when we had a problem with a teacher who wasn't giving us enough time or explaining the problem enough to us. Our communications counselor helped us to decide how to approach the teacher and express how we felt. After we did, everything turned out perfect."**

During the last month Carol's class visited several companies. For Carol, the tours of employment sites, were valuable because they **"gave us a better outlook on what we were learning and on what to expect when we got out here. They showed us what we would be doing on the job and how that relates to learning in the class."**

"When I first started the program" Carol continues, **"I used to tell everybody that I'm going into electronics and they used to say 'you're going to get fried or something by all that electricity'"** Carol smiles proudly **"I tell them that doesn't worry me because I know what I'm doing."**

Nearing the end of training, Carol anticipates her future. **"Five years from now"** she smiles, **"I want to be somebody else's boss. I know I want a lot, probably cause I never had a lot, but with Women Working Technical behind me, I know I can achieve a lot."**

Carol was job placed right in Hackensack at Timeplex Telecommunications.

Shirley Scully on the job. ➡

Shirley's odyssey began with a recruitment piece in a local newspaper.

Shirley reached a milestone when she ran across a local newspaper featuring a piece on careers for women in the trades. Shirley Scully had wondered how women could break into these fields. **"The article spoke to me,"** she recalls.

Having worked as a secretary for eight years to support herself and two young children (Shirley separated from her husband when her daughter and son were two and five), she was dissatisfied with her limited earning power and dim prospects.

She had made every attempt to advance herself, yet secretarial work was not improving her ability to support her family.

Shirley enrolled in and completed a twelve-week Training for Trades and Technology program developed by the Career and Life Counseling Center as a Carl Perkins project. She quickly landed a job as a Utility Mechanic at Public Service Electric and Gas.

She is committed to PSE&G, yet looks forward to the day when she will complete her Bachelors Degree in Engineering, the goal of her studies at a local college.

Shirley marks the Training for Trades and Technology program as a turning point in her life. In the class she learned about being a woman in a male dominated field. She renewed her confidence in her brain power, while obtaining practical knowledge in critical areas of math, and related areas of masonry, carpentry, and tool awareness. She learned about the world of trades and technology. **Most important, her confidence increased because she learned to travel in " new territory."**

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN:

No overnight success, Cindy de Pompei has braved many difficulties to achieve a level of success which many people, with the best of opportunities, would find unattainable.

When Cindy was a child she was considered retarded by her teachers. Now in her early twenties, and a single parent, she wants to be a systems analyst. Educational mislabeling was not Cindy's only barrier. She was removed from an abusive household at the age of eight, and remained in foster care until the age of 16. When she was adopted her life began to change.

While her foster parents had undermined her self confidence ("I was brought up to believe I couldn't do it"), her adopted mother encouraged her. A's and B's began to show up on her high school report cards.

This new direction was stalled in the fall of 1987. Two months after she graduated from high school, Cindy became pregnant. The father walked out on her as soon as he discovered the pregnancy. Cindy marshalled her intelligence and energy. Knowing that her low paying job at a local retail chain store could not provide a future for herself and her child, she enrolled at Bergen Tech's Integrated Office Systems program, attempting to realize her dreams of working with computers.

She started slowly, part-time, and then with the encouragement of a counselor from Career & Life Counseling Center, in January 1988, she started attending full-time, and graduated in July (with a short intermission for the birth of her son).

Cindy did an internship at the Career & Life Counseling Center which helped to refine her skills, and develop her confidence. Her energies paid off. She landed a good job in a bank, and a decent salary. She now lives in her own apartment.

Highly motivated by her own success, and the responsibilities of single parenthood, Cindy has continued to work for self improvement. She is currently attending a community college while working at a full-time job. Her goal is to earn an Associates Degree, solidify a career in the computer field, and embark on a four year college program to become a systems analyst.

Computer Applications Instructor, Vera Walck, teaches computer literacy to her students' children.

A MODEL MISFIT MAKES GOOD

In what she describes as a "me" world, Antoinette is a model misfit.

This is her story:

Before her separation in 1980 Antoinette, a classic displaced homemaker, was at home caring for her four children and her elderly parents. Separation from her husband brought on financial responsibility for the family. Her problems were exasperated by ill health requiring major surgery and prolonged recuperation.

The many years of unpaid service in her marriage provided no safety net for Antionette. She ended up on welfare. She disliked being on public assistance (**"I don't know why anyone would want to be on welfare"**), but the reality was welfare provided more benefits than a low paying job.

A long term welfare recipient, despite her dislike of it, Antoinette suffered from anxiety and dissatisfaction with her life. A friend told her about the Career & Life Counseling Center and Antoinette took advantage of the opportunity, by taking a career exploration course facilitated by Denise DiMicelli.

Denise urged her to take steps to improve her life. First Antoinette completed her high school diploma. Next she enrolled, with financial aid from the Private Industry Council, in the five month Integrated Office Systems program at Bergen Tech.

After completing the program, she entered the job market for the first time. In her late forties, she felt herself discriminated against because of her age, and left her first job.

After several searches, she now is settled in a secretarial position at a local medical center. **"I feel like somebody here,"** Antoinette says.

While life is certainly not a bed of roses for Antoinette, she has indeed come a long way. She keeps her ill mother at home to oversee her care despite the burdens this places upon her. Antoinette perceives herself as an ordinary person just doing her job. Call it success and she looks genuinely surprised that you would believe that.

The Integrated Office System programs, a viable route to economic independence for displaced homemakers.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WORKS!

With ten years of experience as a bookkeeper, Lorraine Garrity, a 36 year old single mother of a six year old, found herself starting over.

"After I got my college degree," Lorraine recalls, **"I realized I had no marketable skills related to my major, so I took the highest paying job I could find, accounts payable/receivable. I got myself into a rut,"** Lorraine sighs. **"It wasn't until I had my son that I really began to get ambitious. He has really motivated me."**

Four months pregnant, Lorraine was alone **"My boyfriend acted like he didn't know me,"** she said **"he deserted me...cut off communications completely. I had to take him to court to get him to pay child support for his son. It took me a whole year to pay my lawyer off."**

Lorraine worked for a New York company for three and one-half years before she got laid off. The unemployment line introduced her to Bergen Tech's Integrated Office Systems, and a special learning environment **"The teachers were enthusiastic, and the curriculum included not only typing, but the basics of word processing and desktop publishing along with resume writing, job search and interviewing skills. If I needed to talk to someone a counselor was always available for me. This was important"** she said, **"since I took four typing courses before I came here and dropped every one of them. I couldn't just drop typing here. One day I got frustrated with my progress so I went to speak with my counselor at the Career and Life Counseling Center. She wrote a note to my teacher suggesting that I take a typing test every day. Being persistent and taking a test every day really helped me."**

Lorraine's unemployment ran out while she was in the program. To enable her to complete her training, the school worked out a cooperative education program for her. **"I attended class in the morning and worked part-time doing word processing and desktop publishing for the Career and Life Counseling Center in the afternoon. I feel like I got good training doing this because I was able to use my new skills right away and this gave me confidence."**

Lorraine's confidence and skills got her the job she wanted. **"I'm starting work next week at United Parcel,"** she states proudly "**using desktop publishing to put together manuals. The great thing about this company is unlimited educational access. They train you on new software packages on site, plus if you want to take a course, or in my case, maybe to go back for my Masters, they pay 100% tuition."**

Provided with the opportunity to reevaluate past decisions Lorraine notes, **"The college education didn't help me prepare for work as well as this program did; I could do a media plan, put together an entire advertising campaign but this didn't get me a job that my son and I could live on."**

Lorraine in her internship with Secretary, Linda Stefanelli, compares design for *Profiles of Transformation*

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Her former teacher says, "Mary has personal charisma, as well as being a gifted and enthusiastic student." Mary Velardi has recently completed the Electronics Technology Training Program at Bergen Tech graduating with honors. In the Spring of 1990 she received an Outstanding Achievement Award in Non-Traditional Education from the New Jersey Division of Vocational Education.

Life has not always been so bright for Mary. **"After my separation from my husband, I was injured in an automobile accident." Mary recalls, "I had two infants under two years of age. The stress, the children, my divorce and what appeared to be a dismal, lonely future were overwhelming."** A welfare recipient, her search for answers began.

The REACH program introduced her to a Life Skills Class taught by the Career and Life Counseling Center. Mary researched educational options and decided to enroll in the Electronics Technology Training. This was a turning point.

"Although, I had spent my life fixing things, it hadn't occurred to me to take any formal training. Electronics training enabled me to have a bright future doing something I'd always liked and find fascinating," she states.

As her skill and mastery increased, she tutored fellow students, and occasionally taught both lab and theory. Her self-esteem soared. **"I was often asked to make presentations and lectures. That really helped bolster my confidence and self-image."**

In addition to her full-time day program, Mary took additional courses in Robotics, UNIX, and Computer Aided Design.

Reflecting on the changes in her life, she comments, **"I now respect the value of education and the role of an educator."**

Mary's children are now ages three and four. Mary believes her improved self-image has carried over to her children. **"They have become more self-sufficient and are excited about the learning experiences they encounter."**

Mary has recently accepted employment as an Electronics Technician, but her goals are long-term. **"I want to continue my education and get a degree in electrical engineering so I can eventually work in research and development."** She believes her decision to enter electronics training at Bergen Tech made the difference between an exciting career and a dead-end job. Her future is as bright and promising as Mary's approach to it.

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HUMANIZING WELFARE: THE WOMEN, THEIR CHILDREN

Rena Grasso, Ph.D.
Diane Scarangella, Ed. D.

From its conception as a charity to assist widows with children, to the New Deal in the 30's, and the Great Society of the 60's, a variety of "welfare to work" reform programs have been initiated. In recent years, the national WIN (Work Incentive) Program, state reform programs, California's GAINS program and New Jersey's REACH (Realizing Economic Achievement) were implemented. A new federal welfare reform, entitled JOBS, is currently being implemented and reflects a similar agenda.

In practical terms, superficially equating "self-sufficiency" with "removal from the welfare rolls" results in programs that facilitate placement in jobs that may exceed welfare grant payments, but do not necessarily exceed poverty guidelines. Income from such jobs is not enough for payment of childcare and/or health care costs. Without livable wage job skills, women and their children end up back upon welfare.

Rules, regulations and poor program planning are grounded in public policy based upon stereotypical and inaccurate assumptions about the reasons for welfare dependency, and the problems women on welfare face. Legislatively, the design of welfare reform programs are often doomed to failure because they reflect these stereotypes, are not rooted in the realities of women's lives, and are not sufficiently responsible to the economic problems. (cf. Section Policy Recommendations)

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ON WELFARE?

In January 1991, over 12.3 million Americans were economically dependent upon Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The total number of children dependent upon welfare, facing homelessness, and living in poverty rose to 8.3 million (*New York Times*, 4/7/91, p. 5).

The overwhelming majority of these households are comprised of single parents (over 90% of whom are female) and their children. Over two-thirds of welfare dependants are children!

The vast majority of women who become dependent upon welfare are the children not of welfare families (a myth about women on welfare), but are the children of poor and working class families.Childhood experiences of being female at this socio-economic level have contributed to the development of barriers that must be addressed in adulthood. These experiences include: a lack of material resources, severe restrictions on educational participation, achievement, and the attainment of marketable skills. The life history of a woman on welfare is frequently founded in economic and personal instability and insecurity.

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

In 1988, as a member of the Bergen County REACH (New Jersey Welfare Reform Program) team, the Career and Life Counseling Center advocated for, developed, and implemented a Life Skills program. Our experience counseling and assessing women on welfare, prior to and during the provision of this program, enables us to identify critical themes impacting upon the success of this population in training and employment.

Over 440 women on welfare attended Life Skills classes provided by Career and Life Counseling Center staff. In addition, in-depth interviews, conducted as a part of the research and preparation for this manual, enables us to validate and further define these themes, to show the power of myths, and to provide the voices of the women themselves:

REPLACING MYTHS WITH REALITIES

DEROGATORY MYTH

Women apply for welfare because they are lazy and don't want to work.

THE REALITY

Women apply for welfare because they lack job skills, work experience, and/or an education. They lack the skills to obtain a livable wage job because they've been taught that a "woman's job is in the home."

IN HER OWN VOICE

"Society and most people like my parents, feel that a woman should get married and stay home with your kids. That's all they're good for. My mother is totally against me working. I'm such a horrible mother because my son's in day care."

"I told my aunt I needed to get a job. She said, you stay home with your kids. If you go to work, I'll throw you out."

DEROGATORY MYTH

It's their fault they're on welfare, and us good honest taxpayer are paying for it.

THE REALITY

Women apply for welfare as a result of divorce, separation or desertion. Many women on welfare worked prior to child-birth and/or come from working-class families. They and their families have long histories of paying taxes. However, the jobs they and their parents have held were low-wage, limiting their ability to afford tuition, child care or transportation costs associated with going to work or school.

IN HER OWN VOICE

"I worked as a medical assistant until my daughter was born. Then my husband convinced me to stay home."

"I went to welfare because I couldn't afford the child care and transportation costs of working. To get help, I had to quit my job and fall on the system. It brought my self-esteem down into the toilet again."

DEROGATORY MYTH

Women on welfare don't do anything all day but hang around on street corners drinking beer or doing drugs. We know they have money, because they drive around in cadillacs.

THE REALITY

Women on welfare spend their day in much the same way any homemaker does. They take care of their children, their house, do laundry, meet with their children's teachers, go food shopping. These activities are more difficult and time consuming for women on welfare, because they have less money. With an income of $322 per month and foodstamps, shopping for food and clothing becomes a demeaning "scavenger hunt," searching for bargains, damaged goods at discount prices and purchasing used clothing. Women on welfare aren't allowed to own cars worth more than $2,000. When they apply for welfare, they must be willing to sell their car if it is worth this amount or more. Then they lack transportation, or are buried under repair bills.

IN HER OWN VOICE

"I try to look nice, dress my kids nice, and people say " Oh, I didn't expect you to be on welfare. Oh, I didn't expect you to have medicare." When they say this, it makes me feel low."

"When you're on welfare you can't get a doctor or a dentist. They turn you down because they don't want medicare."

"I feel humiliated when I wait on line in a bank to cash my welfare check, or at the supermarket to use my foodstamps."

"When I went to welfare they told me my car was worth too much and I would have to sell it. Now I have an old beat up car that keeps breaking down on me. Aside from the cost, what worries me is, what do I do in case of an emergency with my kids. I can't rely on the car."

PEOPLE ARE PRECIOUS

DEROGATORY MYTH

Women on welfare keep having kids in order to get more money from the system. They're baby machines—having children just to rip the public.

THE REALITY

The average woman on welfare has one or two children born before she applied for public assistance. If she has a second child while on welfare her welfare grant will increase by approximately $40 to $60 per month—not enough to pay for the costs of a second child.

IN HER OWN VOICE

"Before I went to my welfare Life Skills class I thought that women on welfare were all black and had 50 kids, and had more kids to get more money, were uneducated and made their own problems. Now I know that this isn't true."

DEROGATORY MYTH

Women on welfare enjoy being dependent upon welfare for their income. It makes them feel good to be taken care of by the system.

THE REALITY

Women who apply for help from welfare do so because they have no other choice. They, like anyone living in this society, have internalized derogatory myths about welfare mothers. They feel demeaned, humiliated and worthless. Welfare regulations, attitudes from workers and intrusive home visits make them feel abnormal and outcast from the community in which they and their children live. As a result they closet themselves, hiding their poverty and stigma in isolation that limits their ability to obtain the resources they need to become free of dependency upon welfare for survival.

IN HER OWN VOICE

"You feel humiliated when you're in the community and you get on line to cash your check, use foodstamps or go to the doctors because you don't want them to know. I feel the stigma attached to it...like I'm not worth anything."

"Social workers coming to your home and checking out every aspect of your life, that any normal person wouldn't have to deal with. It makes you feel abnormal."

"I don't make friends within my town because I don't want them to know. I can't do things with them, like shopping or going to community events, because I don't have enough money for decent clothes or shoes. Since I don't know anyone, I never feel like I know what's going on. I feel like a misfit...Like I'm always hiding. I don't want my kids to feel this way too."

POLICY FOUNDATIONS: LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF WOMEN

To create programs that work, policy makers and educators must address the needs of women on welfare — needs that must be seen clearly. Understanding the impact of past and present conditions of gender pressures and poverty illuminates the human being behind the stigmatized label of "welfare mother." Understanding and insight also reinforce the **essential role of counseling** as an educational tool to insure the enrollment, retention and success of women on welfare in meaningful **vocational training** and **educational programs**. These ingredients are the recipe for real self-sufficiency.

Counseling staff utilized the themes listed below as the foundation for an effective Life Skills curriculum, instructional methodology, and related educational programming. Again, "in her own voice":

COUNSELING THEMES: WOMEN ON WELFARE

LOSS or ABANDONMENT are rooted in parent alcohol abuse, divorce or mental illness, and often result in the loss of childhood (as she becomes responsible for parenting her parent and siblings).

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"My father was a full-time alcoholic. He was there, but he really wasn't. My mother worked all the time to support us. I had to take care of my father and my younger brothers and sisters. Because of his drinking we never did anything as a whole family together. He was never there for us and my mother. Even though my mother wanted to be, she just didn't have the time."

"When she was married to my father, my mother was there all the time. We had everything—lived in a nice house, in a nice town. After the divorce, she had to her own life and all of a sudden, she was gone too much working all day. He had another family and that was it for him. Throw away—felt like he abandoned us."

"My real father promised a whole bunch, but never delivered. I was trashed aside. I was never related to as his child. Especially after he had his new family—his real children."

"My step-father put my mother in a mental institution after she tried to jump out of a moving truck. He sold everything and put us in a the car and just packed us off. We drove for hours until the police finally caught us and brought us back."

LOSS OR FEELINGS OF ABANDONMENT are also rooted in the death of a parent or parent figure, and often result in the loss of childhood and the assumption of the parental role.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"My mother died when I was eight. When she was alive I was so happy. It's a mother that gives you all the love and attention. My father and I never talked. He was never involved in my life. He used to hit me with a belt for things I didn't even do. After she died, I had to do everything—take care of the little ones, do the cleaning the cooking, the laundry. I never had anyone who really cared for me. Even, to this day, I wish my mother was here for me to talk to. If she had been around, things would have been so different. Maybe I wouldn't have ended up like I am, with no self-confidence or anything."

"I was not a child. I was responsible for my family since I was about four. I was the parent—an adult in a childs body. My mother physically and verbally abused us, but we were responsible for taking care of her. She married this wonderful man. He tried to give me a childhood, but he was killed in a car accident. I was the only one with no physical damage —punishment. I was the only one left to take care of my mother, brother and sister after the accident. Then the abuse started again. I used to wish she was dead."

LACK OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, is often accompanied by abuse, complicated by feelings of loss and abandonment, and predisposes her to the repetition of abusive and demeaning relationships in adulthood.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"My mother always said she regretted the day I was born, that she hated me, was jealous of me, wished her life and worse on me."

"I never had any one who really cared for me. So, when my husband started saying, your family doesn't care for you, the only one that cares for you is me. Look at you, nobody else is going to want you, but I don't care how you look. I love you. He psyched my mind. Even after 18 years of beatings I kept going back to him thinking, maybe he's telling the truth this time, he really does care. This is what I always wanted. When we finally did break up, I told him, I'm tired of being mistreated, being cursed at, screamed at, being beaten, being told what to do as if I'm a little kid. You're not my father. You're not my father."

"My husband supported me after my mother threatened to kill me. I stayed quiet and took care of him. From day one, I took care of him. I had to pay back my gratitude."

"Both my parents were alcoholics. I was my step-father's favorite, but we all got beatings and broken bones. I lived with my real father for a while, but one night I woke up and he was in bed with me. When I married my husband I was 14 years old. He was the only person I knew and I had no where else to go. After a while, he started buying drugs and beating me. I left him eight times before I finally left cause I had no one and no where else to go, so he knew I'd keep taking him back...I was raised like that."

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS as a result of lack of love, and the witholding of praise and recognition. Such helplessness reinforces dependency and feelings of powerlessness to control one's own life. Experiences that result in learned helplessness teach that no matter how much effort you put into it, you will not succeed.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"Nothing you do is good enough. I'd have everything done when my mother comes home and it's oh, too bad you didn't have time to do that. I never did get recognition for what I did."

"There were so many things I had to do I go no credit for and if I failed in one thing, even if everything else was ok, I would get punished. I was never told wow, you did this."

"My mother never gave me credit for anything. Everything I did was wrong. All my childhood, all I received was negativity. Even when I said I was going to go to college all she said was, what if you fail, what will you do then?"

"If we cried because our feelings were hurt, my mother would beat us. We weren't allowed to have feelings. She would tell us what to feel, and when to cry. If we didn't cry when she told us to, even if we didn't know why we were crying, she would beat us or she would get our father to hit us. Like she would know he was drunk and that he would fly off and she would start saying, well she did this today or something, and he would fly off and beat us. Then, an hour later, we'd be sitting there, bruises all over our faces and arms and legs, and he would come in and say how sorry he was and how she just got to him. We learned not to say anything. You just take it. You don't feel."

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS reflects socialization to traditional female gender roles—roles that emphasize powerlessness, dependence upon others for economic survival and decision-making, lack of interest in and direction toward a career outside of the home, images of herself as an object or child rather than person, beliefs about the inferiority and lack of competence associated with being female in this society. For some, being female is associated with the reason a loved person physically abuses her. For others, being female is associated with limits placed on access to education. For most, being female meant the loss of her identity to that of her boyfriend or spouse.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"Men are superior to women. What a man says goes. That's how my marriage was. A woman can't do anything unless the husband agrees. It has to be done the way he says. A woman stays home and takes care of the husband, the kids, the house. Not necessarily in that order, but that's a woman's job."

"Women should be married and stay home with your kids. That's all they're good for. It's a man's world."

"The most difficult thing is not seeing myself as an object, but a person"

"He said I was the strongest person he ever met. He said, not just woman, but person."

"Even to this day, my brothers ask me if I stayed with my husband because I like to get hit. They said, they'd heard that some women did like to get hit. Thinking back to when I was a child, my father used to hit me the most, and I was the only female."

"I let him take over my life. He made me into the person he wanted me to be, not who I was. For years, I would wear what he wanted me to wear, do my hair the way he wanted me to—even though I didn't like myself that way."

"I did what ever he said and didn't talk back. He brought home the paycheck. I had to show my gratitude, even after he'd come home drunk and beat me, I had to show my gratitude".

"Staying home after I had my daughter was the biggest mistake I ever made. My husband convinced me to, but from that moment on everything in my life revolved around him. I lost my identity and I'm just starting to find it again."

MEMBERSHIP IN THE POVERTY CLASS, coupled with being female, reinforces low self-esteem, isolation from friends and supportive relationships within the community. It limits access to information and resources, and conveys lower worth. She experiences herself as abnormal an outcast, misfit, out of step with the middle class school or town society.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"Only wealthy familes had the advantage of college. A female, deprived, how could she? I never knew about college boards or scholarships. Why wasn't I told? Why wasn't I given forms to fill out? If you're not in the community, in the educational system, you don't know what comes next."

"We didn't have money for community activities and I never had friendships because I didn't want them to see my home. There were times we ate ketchup or mustard on bread and made believe we were eating steak. There was never enough clothes. The stigma of never having enough of anything...I wasn't worthy of anything."

PHYSICAL UPROOTEDNESS AND MULTIPLE MOVES in childhood stem from poverty, and further reinforce the sense of alienation and isolation from the community. Multiple moves interfere with achievement and learning in school, and further reinforce feelings of helplessness and lack of acceptance or belonging within the community.

IN HER OWN VOICE:

"We kept moving because we rented and it didn't work out. I went to kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade in one school, 3rd and 4th in another, 5th and 6th in another school, 7th through high school in another. It was hard, always adjusting to a new school."

"Four moves in one year—always trying to make up what you missed...still confused by the new steps. You don't fit in because you're not there long enough. Always out of place, always out of character. Always learning to trust all over again."

"I was never one of the popular girls. I never quite fit in. I didn't even go to my senior prom. I just wasn't there long enough."

WELFARE: ECHOES OF CHILDHOOD NEGATIVES

Negative attitudes and myths about women on welfare find many forms of expression.When she applies for welfare, she must complete an eleven page application. She must answer questions about who she has sex with, prove who the father of her child is, be willing to sell her car if it is worth more than $2,000., expect a social worker to visit her home with little or no notice. To obtain assistance for the survival of herself and her children, a woman applying for welfare must accept invasions to her privacy that would never be condoned if the public did not believe that she "made her own bed" and now must pay the price.

Welfare regulations, the negative approaches of some welfare workers, bureaucratic procedures and misguided policies, and the attitudes of society (internalized by the community and by the women themselves) echo and reinforce many negative childhood experiences. Treatment in the current system of people, roles, rules lowers self-worth. Images of herself as a dependent child at a time when she has newly experienced rejection push her down further.

Intrusive forms, and questions about intimate relationships to verify child support searches, "harass and place blame on the person who can't make it." Disparaging treatment places blame and strengthens inadequacy. Complicated forms, and convoluted procedures that require interpretation build dependency upon these sources of disparagment, echoing experiences of dependency upon abusive parents and spouses.

Dependency upon welfare also reinforces a sense of difference, abnormality, shame and alienation from the community. As in childhood, this alienation limits access to services and inhibits the development of friendships and support services. Coupled with JTPA funding regulations, welfare requirements limit access to quality training opportunities and education. Like gender stereotyping, and experiences of abuse, these regulations impose lowered expectations, limit independent decision-making under threat of abandonment, and result in limited options, basically channeling women into short-term, low-wage, traditionally female jobs which force her to return to welfare, and feel bad about her failure.

The overwhelming acceptance of derogatory myths about women who are forced to seek public assistance extends beyond policy makers and social service administrators, to include the community in which women live. Disrespectful behavior, emphasizing the shame of dependency, is commonplace, transforming women into objects without feelings rather than vulnerable human beings in need of respect and compassion. Women on welfare confront this behavior on a daily basis, in grocery store lines when using foodstamps, at banks when cashing welfare checks, in doctors' offices and hospitals when using medicare, or when seeking a dentist who will accept the lowered payments they receive from medicare. This behavior is so prevalent that women who depend upon public assistance for survival come to believe that they are "not normal", are less than worthy, and that they deserve to be demeaned in this way.

All the human suffering, the loss of human potential, the economic dependency are unnecessary. With the menu of counseling principles, programs, quality vocational training advocated in these pages, welfare could be "reformed" for those AFDC families who need a lift. Most women on public assistance could be educated and trained into self-sufficiency—given the will and wisdom of the social order.

WOMEN WORKING TECHNICAL CLASS OF 1990

Over 50% of WWT graduates and successes are women on welfare.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE: COUNSELING FOR GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Counseling is the single most critical process for at-risk populations. Vocational education and training, academic skills, support services for child care — all are essential.Yet for many these can only be accessed, or successfully used, with the help of counseling.

Special populations remain so because barriers prevent them from going forward in their lives. The obstacles are knots; they keep a person tied up in conflicts and (seemingly) unresolvable problems. As counselors, we attend to both inner and outer barriers, knowing that they are symptoms, and causes of each other:

Displaced homemakers can pose a challenge of a different order. Not necessarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, the classic displaced homemaker nonetheless faces economic hardship at a time in her life when she has the least resources, experiences age discrimination, and most needs security. The woman in her forties, fifties, and sixties, without marketable skills, suffers the threat of poverty. This grim reality is all the more difficult if she has fallen from a more privileged position. She is unable to cope with the emotional and practical realities of poverty. Compounding this frightening situation she experiences emotional trauma, — a divorce which leaves her psychologically and financially devastated, or a death which she is mourning. The confluence of two grave crises, emotional and financial, require intensive multidimensional counseling and education.

Denise Di Micelli specializes in counseling displaced homemakers.

Counseling breaks a negative cycle by helping the client to find a way out, to generate new options, to discover a solution, or to change a point of view. The counseling process clarifies and strengthens the sense of self. Counseling is freeing; it clears the path, and provides support to progress.

Personal and career counseling necessarily overlap. Together they foster women's ability to transform obstacles, and to build occupational, life, character, skills, and confidence crucial to personal and vocational success.

NAMING THE BARRIERS

The conditions of economic and social, racial, and gender discrimination, predispose women (and other disadvantaged groups) to problems, conflicts, and undeveloped potentials.

"I was always ashamed to go to school with a bread and ketchup sandwich for lunch. So I'd eat it on the way to school and then go hungry — I was so ashamed — what would others think about me and my family."

Women internalize damaging social messages. On the one hand not encouraged or allowed to develop competencies/abilities, or character traits which are highly valued (leadership, independence, e.g.); on the other, they are praised for characteristics socially, economically, and physically weakening (dependency, fragility, "niceness" but not strength). This classic double-bind paralyzes many women in the core of their beings.

Poor women suffer the by-products of poverty in addition. There is the stress of economic struggle, and increasingly the threat of homelessness. There is the pain of not being able to provide for self and children. And then there is the cruelty of stigma and stereotyping, and shame-inducing circumstances.

Poverty is frequently portrayed as the fault of the poor. The classic example is the myth of the "welfare women." She is lazy; she breeds children so the state will take care of them; she lives high on the hog, on the backs of the taxpayers . These are false and crude distortions. Yet the women feel them, and are hurt by these attitudes which foster low self-esteem, bitter anger, or perhaps defiance and other forms of self-destructive behavior.

The combination of external and internal factors affecting disadvantaged women is the focus of the counseling process. There are issues, typical conflicts and behavior binds, which are frequently present, and in need of attention. Because of their centrality and frequency, we call them

COUNSELING THEMES

LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND LACKING CONFIDENCE

Feeling inadequate and unworthy impedes individual well-being and growth. This theme heads the list because women are so profoundly handicapped by the inner feeling and voice that says "I can't," "I am unworthy," "I am lacking," or "I am bad."

The strength of one's self-esteem is the most important ingredient of achievement. Women often don't believe they can do much of anything. They don't value what they do do, or hold back from doing out of self-doubt. And then feel inadequate and unworthy. This vicious cycle has deep roots within socialization patterns, and within conditions of social and economic discrimination. Deep-seated feelings of unworthiness and badness predispose women to many abusive relationships, and keep them from discovering and developing their potential.

SELF-DEFEATING PATTERNS

These are evident in **thinking** and **behavior** habits which prevent movement towards self-defining activities.

Learned helplessness , what psychologists call weak "locus of control," is prevalent amongst women. Women and girls learn passivity and dependence upon others by experiencing repeated frustrations in their attempts to make an impact, or to get a response, from their active strivings. Mastery is denied:
"No matter what I did I never made the grade — even when the answer was right and I thought I did a good job, the teacher gave no praise — only criticized my penmanship. When she did praise me, it was always about the neatness of my paper — never about my ideas. I guess my ideas are probably no good. It doesn't seem to matter even if I try hard."

The connection between learned helplessness and low self-esteem is strong. If you don't believe what you do matters, eventually you do nothing. But that doesn't mean you don't suffer in your rut: "I can't do it," or "I never was good in school," or " I couldn't stand to fail again." "I feel empty and anxious deep inside myself."

Women are often entangled in negative behavior patterns around self-definition, and relationships with others. On the one hand, there can be unwillingness to take responsibility for one's self ("I can't help it if..."); on the other, there is a tendency to take responsibility for other peoples' problems. These two are interrelated. Women's fear of independence and autonomy often find expression in an unwillingness to take responsibility for her own life, or her tendency to be over-responsible for others.

The other side of the coin is the woman who focuses her energy on the impossible task of changing others, and then suffers from the inevitable frustration: the woman whose energy is bound up in the guilt she feels when others (especially children or spouses) are not doing well; or the co-dependent woman who channels care and concern for self, into ministering to the needs of others, frequently abusive and undermining of her.

Other self-defeating behaviors show up in the form of procrastination habits, or in life patterns which demonstrate self-sabotaging: three quarters through the training program a woman drops out. Despite her success, she claims she can't do it.

Unrealistic expectations (too high or too low) are often stumbling blocks to achievement. "I've got to get out there and make $35,000;" or "I could never make the grade." Grandiose fantasies inevitably lead to defeat and the feeling of inadequacy. Constantly trying to improve one's life by winning the lottery leads to a dead end. Complementairly, to have no expectations for one's self is equally deadening: "There are so many things that are just too hard for me to learn."

LACK OF FUTURE ORIENTATION

Based in an environment which demands constant response to the immediate crisis, and provides little fulfillment, many poor women do not believe they can improve their future. This will show itself in destructive budgeting habits, the lack of ability to self-dicipline, or to plan and organize for success at a later date. Delaying gratification for a larger good is an unfamiliar experience.

GUILT AND ANGER

Many women alternate between blaming and punishing themselves, and being angry, bitter, and disgusted with others. Anguishing over who's at fault can be a central theme, played repeatedly, in the inner life of many women: "He discouraged me, he wouldn't let me, but then again, I'm at fault for...."

Feelings of guilt eat away at their sense of well-being, "I'm inadequate as a mother," "It's my fault" or "If only I..."; or, the other side of the coin, "I didn't deserve this," "I've been dealt a lousy hand," " I've been betrayed," and a whole chorus of pitying recrimination.

ANGER often stands out because of its destructive power, and its pervasiveness in woman's lives "It's not nice to be angry." "If I allow myself to get angry, I'll lose my..." Often our clients suffer from chronic anger which erupts in hostility and rageful outbursts; or it leaks out in passive aggressive behavior; or it finds expression in "a chip on the shoulder style," or in withdrawal and consequential depression. The roots of chronic anger lie deep in family histories and childhood experiences.* The legacy of childhood traumas run deep, and are constantly reinforced by the daily frustrations of sexism in our society.

A lot of anger stems from disillusionment. Many women have bought the American dream of romance, family, and material plenty. When the marriage fails they feel ripped-off, betrayed, and, even deeper , they suffer from a sense of unworthiness, secretly blaming themselves for the failure of their dreams.

"A normal family goes out together, has holidays together, has a nice home they own and a car and they share and talk and care for each other — that's what I know I'll have when I grow up — someone to watch over me."

Conflicts with motherhood and relationships with partners and spouses, are frequent sources of anger in women's lives. Single parents can frequently be crippled by their inability to cope constructively with the anger they feel at ex-spouses, and with being burdened by the responsibility of child care.

Unresolved guilt and anger cause many physical, emotional, and developmental problems which get in the way of women taking charge of their lives, personally, socially, and economically.

* The incidence of childhood abuse and incest are stunning: one-third of women have been sexually victimized before mid-teens.

NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR

"No one listened when I was a child. I wasn't allowed to cry or complain, and now I don't know how. I just take it and get by."

To formulate or attain positive goals, women need to chalienge the non-assertive behavior fostered by sex role stereotyping. Blocked from expressing feelings and thoughts; inhibited from changing negative situations, or achieving and realizing needs and desires, or from undertaking new activities, — all are frustrating, stressful, and major sources of low self-esteem.

Many women have difficulty setting limits to other peoples' demands upon them. Consequently they have difficulty finding time or energy to do for themselves. Some women can't ask for what they want or need (such as help with a class assignment they don't understand); many can't present themselves positively (so they lackluster on a job interview;) others will have difficulty in taking initiative, seizing the risk of a challenge and opportunity.

Non- assertion produces negative behaviors — hostile, passive aggressive, and manipulative styles of behavior.

Non-assertive behavior leaves women open to abuse from others, to being taken advantage of by others; and it impedes women from taking charge of their lives in any dimension.

UNDEVELOPED LIFE SKILLS

How we behave with life's inevitable stresses; how we get things done; how we approach problems and conflicts; how we meet our own needs and desires; how we agree and disagree with others, — all these daily issues, and our approaches to them, form the fabric of our inner and outer worlds.

Life skills are mental and behavioral habits essential for healthy and productive living. They are the learned abilities of self-discipline, of planning, of organizing. They are the skills that people develop to make and follow through on decisions; they are the ability to deal constructively with stress, and to achieve positive personal and work relationships, and goals.

Generally, disadvantaged women, like other special populations, have not been taught, nor have they experienced life conditions, which have led to the development of self-fulfilling, productive life skills — particularly those demanded for employment and economic self-sufficiency.

ISOLATION

"I have no adults to talk with. I'm with kids all day long.." Many single parents are homebound, alone with only their children, without money, transportation, or child care, and without a support network. This experience is lonely, and disorienting. Our women report feeling trapped, and confused with their own unsorted, and unexpressed, thoughts and feelings. The pain of the unexpressed is anguishing, and imprisoning.

HEALTH

Many women suffer from physical health problems, either caused, or exacerbated, by living conditions with high stress and anxiety levels. If not their own, it is frequently children's health problems which cause serious barriers to employment. Children with asthma, or learning disabilities are the source of chronic instability for women; however, even the common childhood diseases cause havoc in terms of her employability. Without a child care system to support her, a case of measles or a flu can be disastrous.

POOR, UNSTABLE LIVING CONDITIONS

Many disadvantaged women come from backgrounds characterized by family and home instability, by frequent uprooting, changes in homes, neighborhoods and schools, and the ensuing emotional and physical disorientation. Now, as single parents, they are vulnerable to recurrence: high cost of housing, an abusive spouse one needs to hide from, etc., constantly threaten or demand moving around or homelessness. Some suffer from crowded living conditions. One woman featured in this training manual lived with three children in a three room apartment for ten years.

TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

The high cost of automobiles, of car repairs and car insurance, the lack of a driver's license, all can deprive women of the most common form of mobility. Left to public transportation, however, she can often be severely handicapped by an inadequate system which condemns her to numerous buses in order to either seek education, or to fill a job.

CHILD CARE DIFFICULTIES

Child care is extremely expensive, in the case of infant care, astronomically expensive, and often simply unattainable. The absence of sufficient after-school child care sites is a serious impediment to full-time employment for many women. Then, beyond these obstacles, are the conflicting feelings of mothers. Many women are deeply saddened by the prospect of being removed from their children, feel wrenching guilt, and a great deal of fear. **"I've been with her by ourselves now for six months. She's too young. I have always been taught a good mother stays home for their child. What will others think?"**

PARTNERSHIP WORKS

G.E. sponsors a plant tour for Center clients

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

An effective counseling program combines general counseling principles with those based in feminist research. Gender (and then in conjunction with race, ethnicity, and class background), has a profound impact upon girls and women.

Still there is relatively little mainstream attention to the uniqueness of female experience.

Traditional counseling and psychology have neglected, or distorted, women's inner and outer worlds. Counseling practice which perpetuates gender blindness or bias is at best ineffective, at worst, destructive.

Feminist counseling principles are necessary for women, and for special populations at large. Women as a social group cut across class and race boundaries. Many similarities link women and at-risk males. Shared economic and educational deprivation and discrimination; the experience of bias; and negative stereotypes, form a common ground. Both women and disadvantaged minorities of both sexes benefit from the following principles and practices:

LISTEN

This basic counseling principal is particularly important for women. Many are homebound, and isolated with children, sometimes non-communicative spouses, too. As clients of agencies and professionals, as friends and coworkers, or as citizens, women often experience that their opinions are not invited, accepted, or heard. To be listened to can be a new and catalyzing experience. It can be a major vehicle for empowerment, for triggering the energies of change and growth.

RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE: "Unconditional Positive Regard" (Carl Rogers)

Women (and special populations) often experience lack of respect for their views, opinions, and behaviors. Frequently a good counselor is the only person in their lives who provides respectful and affirming attention. A respectful attitude is felt by the client. She is thereby encouraged to open up to the processes of self-exploration, to communicate, and thereby to know herself better. Without respect on the part of the counselor for the client, trust is destroyed, and no meaningful counseling ensues.

Race, class, and sex bias is so integral to our cultural experience that individual counselors and programs at large must commit critical self-examination to uncover sometimes subtle biases which can seriously hamper the delivery of positive counseling resources to disadvantaged persons.

EXPECTATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

It is important to have realistic expectations of our clients. If they are given a research assignment, we expect them to fulfill it, and we keep them to that responsibility. The point is that one of the damaging legacies of female socialization is low expectation particularly in regards to achievement oriented issues. We need to expect achievement from our clients, and a demonstration of the responsibility that it requires.

Equally important is to provide encouragement and positive reinforcement. Women suffer greatly from a lack of encouragement and valuation of their work and achievements. Sometimes it is important to set up situations which allow women to achieve, and then to follow their achievement with appropriate positive affirmation.

Counseling, with methods for identifying and examining individual skills, values, and interests, gives women the space, the tools, and support to look within, to affirm self, and to become healthfully self-directed. **"I don't know what I'd like or want for myself — never thought about it."**

STRENGTHEN SELFHOOD

Self-exploration is the basic process energizing both personal and career counseling. In essence, the counselor's role is to help the client discover her own wishes, values, and goals,—again the personal and the career orientations blend in this critical sphere. Yet women experience a peculiar difficulty with this basic principle of mental health. The difficulty is rooted in the many social messages which discourage women from taking care of themselves. Rather, women are generally socialized to think that taking care of themselves is selfish (thereby bad), and that their proper, natural, and good orientation is to take responsibility and give to others, (generally spouses and children).

Counselors need to encourage and foster the healthiness of self-knowledge, to promote taking care and taking responsibility for one's self.

BELIEF IN CHANGE

One of the more poisonous fruits of powerlessness ("My life is not in my control") is disbelief in the ability to change and grow. Pessimism paralyzes.

Many of our clients don't believe they can give more positive direction to their lives: "No matter what I do, it doesn't matter." "I have no luck." "That's just the way it is, what can you do?"

AFFIRM STRENGTHS

Women frequently discount or fail to recognize their own strengths and values. This tendency is deeply rooted in the social devaluation of women's roles and qualities. Motherhood provides the classic example.

Women are often not able to approve or affirm themselves for the difficult, compassionate, giving, and skillful task of raising their children; and they don't realize the organizational and character skills they use in their daily lives.

The counseling approach needs to help women see the intrinsic, basic value of their motherhood skills, their household management experience (amongst all others), and help transfer them to the job world. Providing women with the realization that motherhood is largely devalued in this society gives them a perspective on low self-esteem which can be freeing and eventually empowering of positive self-transformation.

CHALLENGE IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AND DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

Respect, acceptance and non-judgmental attitudes are not to be confused with agreement and complacency. Criticism is not the same as blame and humiliation. Women are often devalued, demeaned, and "put down" in subtle and overt ways.

As counselors, we avoid reinforcing such negatives. Yet it is critical that we point out destructive behavior, and play the role of facilitators of change, helping our clients to confront learned behavior which is detrimental. This often requires calm but persistent confrontation, coupled with support aiding the client in her change process. Cognitive therapy approaches, coupled with feminist attention, are very powerful counseling methods in this domain of consciousness and behavior. Striking the healthy balance between non-judgmental acceptance and constructive critical feedback eludes familiar prescription. Yet it is at the heart of the counseling process.

FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES

Non-assertive attitudes and behaviors are essential to maintaining powerlessness. With women these frequently show up in relationships. Afraid to hurt others, afraid of being punished and abandoned for self-expression, women sometimes develop manipulative substitutes for direct communication. Then they suffer the consequences. They become indecisive or in conflict, anxious, in a morass of confusion and pain, unable to assert their own voices, desires, and plans. They need to be encouraged to develop assertive attitudes ("I am worthy and have rights,") and helped to develop assertive behaviors (communications, activities, initiative) which build esteem. Cognitive therapy and behavioristic methods are very effective counseling tools for building assertive behavior.

THE GROUP FORMAT

Ideally, program participants are accessed into both individual and group counseling options.

Individual counseling is the centerpiece of an effective program. It offers practical and unique benefits. The one-on-one relationship fosters self-disclosure, builds trust, and aids in resolving difficult life and career issues.

Yet the group provides special benefits. First, it redresses the isolation and lack of opportunity for adult dialogue which many women suffer. It allows participants to interact with others, and to find understanding, validation, and the support of others. When the participant discovers the similarity between her concerns/issues and those of other women, she simultaneously finds a freeing perspective. It is a liberating realization to see that one is not alone, and that sharing with others is so rewarding. **"I'm not the only one"** can spark an electric turnabout in a woman's life.

The group draws strength from the variety of participants. Shared experiences, the caring and concern of others, and sometimes a very practical resource such as a means of transportation or a child care provider. The opportunity for **altruism** is another critical group experience. It is very strengthening for a woman to be helpful and caring to others; this provides both transcendence of narrow self-concern, and the feeling of goodness and competence with the resulting confidence that springs from such a foundation.

While the counseling principles and the programs described below are woven into both individual and group counseling, the group lends itself especially well to certain topic areas. **Sharing, modeling,** and **group support** are powerful vehicles for life skills development. In an assertiveness program, for example, the sharing of fears and inhibitions helps free participants from the oft times paralyzing grip of irrational attitudes; the modeling of effective communication skills by other participants and the facilitator develops competencies; modeling of each others' successes encourages and motivates each participant to progress in her own self-development. In the group, **affirmation is a chorus of positive energy cultivating the growing selves of all its members.**

RECRUITMENT AND PROGRAMMING:

The following group programs are both effective counseling and educational vehicles, **and** very effective recruitment strategies. This is particularly true for the most difficult-to-access populations of women such as displaced homemakers, teen mothers, and minority women. To this end, it is especially effective to facilitate these programs, on site, in communities likely to catch the attention of special populations of women. We have been most successful in presenting Life Skills and Personal Growth groups in adult education programs throughout our county; in libraries; and to parents at day care centers.

GROUP PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Peer Support Groups: these are especially healing for displaced homemakers. They overcome isolation, develop self-knowledge, build communication and life skills, encourage sharing of resources, and provide the benefits of role modeling.
Format: weekly, 2-3 hours

Life Skill Programs: founded in the powerful theory and methods of behavioral and cognitive psychology, these structured groups use participatory exercises, role modeling, and provide information, which promote participants' capacity to explore options, to plan and organize, to make and follow through (and accept the outcomes of) decisions. They also foster attitudes and practices which help people cope with frustration, pressure, and hardship, and stressful change.
Format: minimum of one, 3 hour session
group of 8-12

Personal Growth Groups: these groups focus on emotional and psychological issues central to many women's lives.
They are short-term therapeutic workshops whose effectiveness is rooted in basic principles of psychoanalysis (expressing feelings), cognitive, and behavioristic practices (learning to think and behave more productively).
* Facilitators need to be ready to identify and deal appropriately with participants whose need for psychotherapy goes far beyond short-term group activities.
Format: minimum of 3-6 hours
group of 8-12

RECRUITMENT EXAMPLES

Times

For Immediate Release

The Career and Life Counseling Center presents a 12 hour seminar in:

STRESS MANAGEMENT

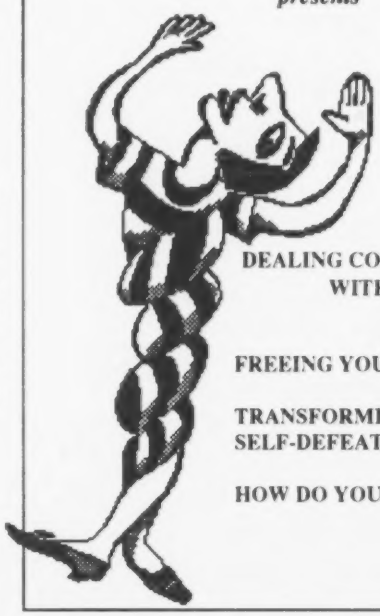
MANAGING YOUR TIME: A PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

DECISION-MAKING: A SKILL TO LEARN

PROBLEM-SOLVING: AN ALTERNATIVE TO ESCAPE

BUDGETING DO'S AND DON'TS'

The Career and Life Counseling Center presents



DEALING CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH ANGER

FREEING YOURSELF FROM GUILT

TRANSFORMING SELF-DEFEATING PATTERNS

HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S LOVE

"Tell me how a person judges her self-esteem and I will tell you how that person operates at work, in love, in sex, in parenting, in every important aspect of existence—and how high she is likely to rise.
The reputation you have with yourself—your self-esteem—is the single most important factor for a fulfilling life."
—NATHANIEL BRANDON

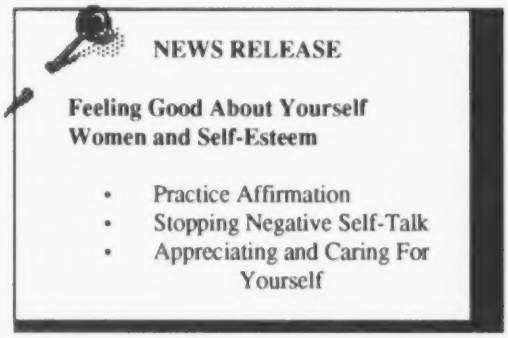
WOMEN AND SELF-ESTEEM WORKSHOPS

Across lines of economic class, of age, of racial and ethnic experience, one of the more profound similarities in a typical women's group is low self-esteem.

This negative inner state severely handicaps women. How a person sees herself (self-image) and how she thinks about and evaluates herself (self-concept) is by widespread consensus the most significant ingrediant for a life of well-being—however defined.

It is crucial to provide Personal Growth groups focused on developing self-esteem and on those facets of female experience which need to be made conscious and changed for women to enjoy healthy self-regard.

Format: 8-10
18 hours, 6 weeks



SELF-ESTEEM AND ASSERTIVENESS

One of the most serious determinants of low self-esteem among women is non-assertive behavior. The reasons for the pervasiveness of unassertive habits among women are intricate. Generally, however, they stem from female socialization that emphasizes self-sacrifice, pleasing others at the expense of self, and a range of "ladylike" self-denial, messages and injunctions:

TYPICAL STATEMENTS:

I am afraid of what others think.
I let others dominate me.
I have a bad self-image. I'm fat.
I never speak out.
I'm only a mother.
I cannot accept a compliment (I'm not worthy).
I can't tell him how I feel. I'll hurt him.
I find myself giving in just to...

Assertiveness Training and Programs

These structured groups are a most important component for women. Employing many rational cognitive methods, coupled with special attention to women's issues, they are very effective vehicles for teaching women how to take charge of their lives; for building self-esteem; and for developing communications skills and competencies critical for personal and career success.

Format: 12-18 hours
8-12 group size

CAREER/VOCATIONAL COUNSELING THEMES

Personal and Life Skills development issues are woven into the career counseling process. The barriers impact upon, and unresolved, they influence or impede, fundamental matters such as one's ability to choose and decide, and successfully follow through on career decisions. Practically, and especially for special populations, personal, life skills, and career counseling blend together.

Yet there are also specific career counseling challenges: Women present distinct issues, different from men's. There are role conflicts (motherhood and career) which can be tearing and lead to indecisiveness, guilt, etc.. Because female children do not receive the message of being self-supporting, instead are encouraged towards dependency, as women, they frequently display ambivalence about independence, fear and conflicts which block clear action. Restricted experiences and low expectation levels rooted in childhood sex role socialization result in low self-expectation, motivational conflicts, limited career knowledge, and a narrow range of career choice/preference. The following pinpoint key career issues for women:

LOW ASPIRATION LEVELS

Many women and disadvantaged individuals have learned to keep themselves at the bottom. They don't allow themselves ambition. This learned behavior is grounded in low self-esteem, and it is expressed in women's typical choice of career aims well below their capacity: "I want to be a nurse's aide" (rather than I want to be an RN); or, "I guess I want to work in an office" (but, if encouraged by a counselor, what I really want to do is be a writer or an architect, or an executive). Most women who come for counseling begin by expressing, usually in a tentative voice, a goal to go into health care, cosmetology, retail, or clerical. The thing they most know is they want to *work with people*. Poor women have few alternative role models. **"Seventy six (76%) percent of non professional women are in four occupations: clerical, sales, factory, service."**

OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

The concentration of women in typical female jobs, and the related lack of role models in non-traditional jobs, deeply affects women. The limitations they see around them become ingrained into their consciousness, affecting how they see themselves, what they wish for themselves, and what they aspire towards, and "choose."

Women most often express vocational preferences which mirror their societal roles, and which fall short of a livable family wage. A classic example is the teen mother whose vocational horizons are limited to cosmetology, a field typically female, with the illusion of glamour, and the reality of low pay and no benefits.

Disadvantaged and poor women are particularly handicapped by poor and damaging school experiences. They often associate school with failure, and with humiliation, remembering with graphic, vivid detail a childhood experience which has scarred them, and blocked their love for learning and growth.

LACKING OR SPOTTY WORK HISTORIES

Displaced homemakers are typically handicapped by an outmoded employment history. Yet far more difficult, and as prevalent amongst disadvantaged women, single parents and displaced homemakers, are those whose employment histories demonstrate job hopping, frequent periods of unemployment, and, in some cases, gaps due to incarceration in mental institutions or jails. In this instance the connection between internal barriers, undeveloped life skills, and economic well-being is dramatically made. Most of these irregularities are due to the behavior and attitudinal problems discussed previously.

EMPLOYMENT ATTITUDES, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOW-HOW

Disadvantaged people do not have the kind of skills or knowledge (nor have certain personal characteristics been cultivated) which lead more privileged people to the command of techniques and/or to the development of personal characteristics which enhance job attainment, career development, and career advancement. Some of these issues are rather simply defined. It is important to provide a résumé writing and counseling service. It is also important to offer interview preparation classes, and to provide for role modeling experiences within these classes.

BROADEN OCCUPATIONAL HORIZONS, AND ENCOURAGE NON-TRADITIONAL CHOICE FOR WOMEN:

This belongs first in a manual with an emphasis upon women. Occupational segregation and sex-role stereotyping have narrowed women's view of occupations available to them. When we educate, and expose, women to the non-traditional fields available to them, we expand the work field tenfold. In addition to job satisfaction and life enhancement, the benefits of non-traditional are higher pay, broader and more adequate benefits, and more plentiful job opportunities. These are critical to the single parent's ability to maintain herself and her family, and to enhancing all women's capacity to discover satisfying work, and to develop their potentials.

PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION

Most people, and the disadvantaged particularly, need accurate information about the job market, training resources, the availability of support services, and a range of factual information necessary to secure a viable economic life. **"I would have gone to college but I wasn't rich and was placed in a work track in school and no one told me about financial aid."**

FACILITATE AND DIRECT SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Being clear about one's self is a very difficult task. We need to help people to get in touch with, and to name, their values, their strengths, their interests. Then we need to show how to connect that self-knowledge with life decisions, educational planning, employment direction; and how to positively relate to others on the job and in the workplace.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES

Women need to be taught how to find a job, keep a job, and how to advance in a career. Special populations are often not provided knowledge about employment opportunities, and further, many have not been encouraged to develop attitudes leading to successful employment experiences, career advancement, or educational opportunity.

However, there are less definable matters which need to be addressed for our target population. The issue of appropriate dress can be a problem both in terms of knowledge, and in terms of financial resources. For instance, the Center has entered into a partnership with a secondhand clothing store which agrees to provide our clients clothes' consultation as well as clothes at a reasonable and affordable price.

More difficult to define and approach are issues of work attitudes which lead to success. These include behavior towards authorities and supervisors; work attitudes and values which are conducive to advancement; the ability to see jobs as steps on a career ladder, and to plan ahead. For both women and non-western males the ability to project and market oneself, to "blow one's own horn" is problematic given that female socialization and non-western culture does not encourage self-advertisement.

Career Education Programs are great recruitment vehicles

Career Counseling is an active, many faceted process that entails clarifying values, determining interests and preferences, gathering and evaluating information, decision-making, planning, acting, and evaluating outcomes.

Counseling special populations, however, also entails attentiveness to time and financial restraints, consideration of conflicts involving the client and, most especially children and spouses, and a great need for positive role models, information, and encouragement.

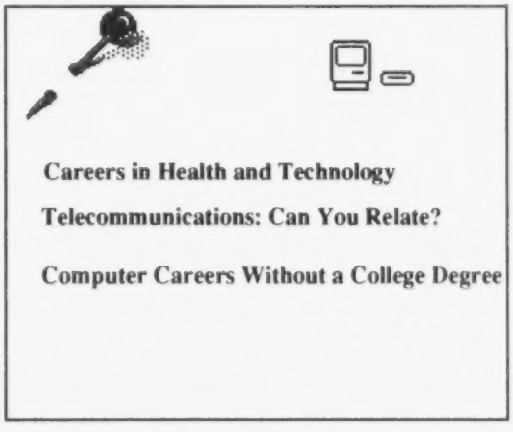
CAREER EXPLORATION WORKSHOPS/ACTIVITIES

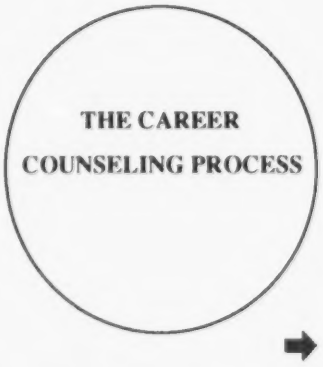
Include all facets of the counseling process and enrich them by drawing upon the groups' experience. In conjunction with individual counseling they are effective for decision-making in a time-limited framework.

Format: 6-8 weeks
8-10 group size

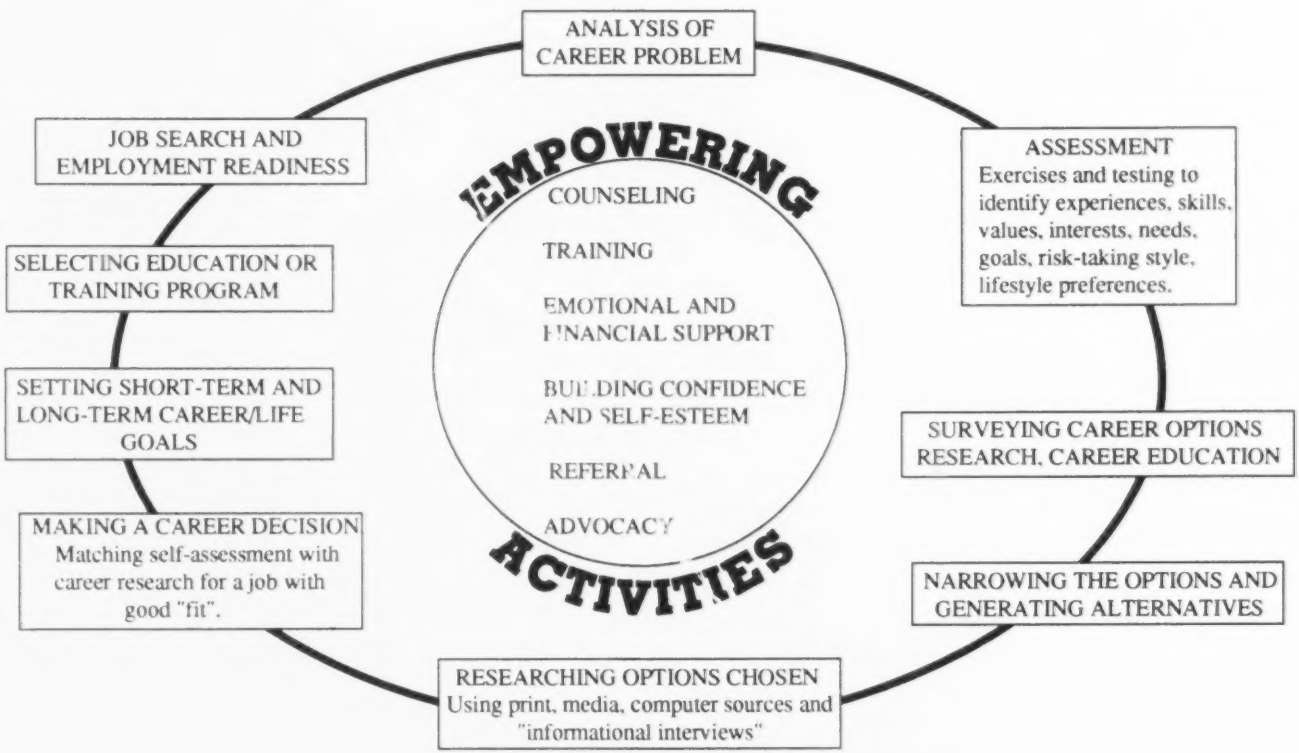
CAREER EDUCATION PANELS

Combine many strengths, quick transfer of knowledge, role modeling and networking. They are great recruitment and public relations vehicles. At this point in time it is especially important to target new emerging careers, and to emphasize non-traditional options:





THE CAREER COUNSELING PROCESS


ANALYSIS OF CAREER PROBLEM
ASSESSMENT
Exercises and testing to identify experiences, skills, values, interests, needs, goals, risk-taking style, lifestyle preferences.
SURVEYING CAREER OPTIONS RESEARCH, CAREER EDUCATION
NARROWING THE OPTIONS AND GENERATING ALTERNATIVES
RESEARCHING OPTIONS CHOSEN
Using print, media, computer sources and "informational interviews"
MAKING A CAREER DECISION
Matching self-assessment with career research for a job with good "fit".
SETTING SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM CAREER/LIFE GOALS
SELECTING EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAM
JOB SEARCH AND EMPLOYMENT READINESS
EMPOWERING
COUNSELING
TRAINING
EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT
BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM
REFERRAL
ADVOCACY
ACTIVITIES

Counselors "empower" clients at each step by teaching them skills they can use in the future as well as now: assertive communication, self-assessment, brain storming, research, decision making.

Prepared by: Career and Life Counseling Center at Bergen Tech, Hackensack, NJ

NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER PANELS

The unfamiliar is unknown, and evokes fear. Not seeing other women in non-traditional roles stops women from considering lucrative and challenging fields in the trades and in technical areas.

These panels, the information they impart, the networking they encourage, and the role models they provide —constitute a most powerful tool for non-traditional programs, and impact vital information. They encourage networking and provide role models,—all powerful vehicles for promoting non-traditional choice.

THE CAREER AND LIFE COUNSELING CENTER
PRESENTS

CAREERS IN ELECTRICITY
AND ELECTRONICS

Pam Williams, I.B.E.W., Local 13
Maria Romero, Customer Service Engineer, I.B.M.
Carol Johnson, Sales Representative, Texas Instruments

CAREER EDUCATION SPECIAL TOPICS

These are one-session, excellent recruitment and educational programs focused upon crucial career concerns affecting women and special populations. **Format:** 3-6 hours

JOB CHANGE AFTER 50
RETURNING TO THE JOB MARKET
CAREER STRATEGIES FOR MOTHERS
CAREER CHOICE AND SELF-ESTEEM
TAPPING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET
FROM SECRETARY TO...?

EMPLOYMENT READINESS WORKSHOPS

Employment Readiness Workshops provide resource materials, know-how and support relating to job search, self-presentation, and career advancement.

RÉSUMÉ-WRITING
THE ASSERTIVE INTERVIEW
JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES
DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

EMPLOYMENT READINESS WORKSHOP

SEXUAL HARASSMENT WORKSHOPS

Sexual harassment is commonplace enough to require the attention of programs advocating for women's economic well-being. Sexual harassment can reach astounding proportions. At certain times, as documented in research, harassment on the job has actually become violent. Women have been raped and murdered on construction sites in this country. More commonly, the harassment is psychological. Sexual come-on's, threats, inducements, etc... are forms of mental assault.

Women experience a great deal of confusion around this issue. It can be very difficult to determine when a communication crosses the line between acceptable teasing and genuine sexual harassment. It can be very difficult to figure out when the line between an initiation ritual which applies to men as well as women has taken place, and when sexual harassment is occuring. In short simply identifying the occurance of harassment constitutes a first level of difficulty for women.

How to respond once we have determined that we are being subjected to sexual harassment becomes the next crucial issue. Depending upon the level and scope of the problem, our appropriate next step might be a simple communication. Repeated, or more serious forms of harassment, might entail grievance procedures, or legal actions.

It is critical that women learn their legal rights, how to access and defend them, and/or how to first identify and take appropriate steps to protect themselves.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ROUNDING OUT THE SERVICES: TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

ASSESSMENT

Assessment begins with the **intake interview**. In addition to soliciting client demographics for purposes of accountability, and for knowing the life space of the client, the intake assesses first the presenting goals and issues as defined by the client. Counseling themes, both external and internal are barriers as verbalized in a previous section, will generally become explicit during the intake, and become part of the assessment. Career goals, or confusion about career objectives, comprises an important information exchange during the intake interview. Together, after an hour intake, the counselor and client both are able to come to closure around the beginning of an educational and career plan, which will include, where necessary, the availability of life skills, and personal counseling.

Assessment then is a process of explicitly articulating an individual's assets (characteristics, skills, employment history), and those life areas which require strengthening, to include the areas of occupational training, educational remediation, or life skills development (or any combination thereof). Assessment begins in the intake but is continuous throughout the client's stay in her program. One specialized form of assessment is the variety of tests which have been generated since World War I to help people determine their strengths and weaknesses. They must however be used with caution.

Tests evoke very negative memories for many special populations. They are associated with judgement, with rejection, and with failure. On the one hand, people often erroneously expect that a test, such as an interest inventory, will magically provide "the answer" to what they want to do. It is important to approach and communicate the assessment process as one to aid self and career explorations, to develop self-knowledge, and to help with appropriate placement.

The key to effective use of assessment instruments is to regard them as an art, and to imbed them in a complex of activities in which they form only one piece of a larger picture. There is after all no instrument scientifically sophisticated enough to capture with accuracy the complexities of a person's personality, or the subtleties and nuances of an individual's career choice. Once we acknowledge this truth, and incorporate it into a creative and comprehensive assessment approach, then we can find positive use for such instruments as:

INTEREST INVENTORIES	PERSONALITY INSTRUMENTS	APTITUDE/ PLACEMENT TESTS
Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory	Myers-Briggs Temperment Indicator (MBTI)	General Aptitude Battery Test (GATB)
CAI (Career Assessment Inventory) especially appropriate for non-college clients.	Personality Preference Form	Adult Basic Skills Education Instrument (TABE)
Holland Self-Directed Search (particularly good for group usage)		Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE)

NETWORKING

An effective program requires a whole menu of support (really survival) services. Programs must do this by organizing a referral network in their community to tap such essentials as housing assistance, legal assistance, educational programs, long-term mental health counseling, domestic violence agencies, childcare resources.

Developing such networks is also the **most effective of all recruitment strategies, and it costs nothing.**

ADVISORY COUNCILS

Much has been written on the importance of advisory councils for women's programs. From our experience the advisory council functions optimally when it consists of between ten and fifteen members representing employment and training, the Board of Social Services, business and industry, women and minority organizations, local government officials, and, wherever possible, advocates for women from grassroots organizations.

The Advisory Council constitutes a special form of networking. It sharply focuses and channels the memberships' resources and energies into enhancing recruitment and outreach, enriching program development in all areas, and, in some cases, providing an advocacy base, or fundraising leverage.

ACADEMIC BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A significant proportion of women, single parents, displaced homemakers, teen mothers, and women on public assistance, are seriously handicapped by poor educational backgrounds. This prevents entrance into vocational training, or the ability to obtain a job, and/or to succeed on a job, particularly in today's more technical work force. Many lack a high school diploma and without this, or a GED, are closed out of vocational training requiring federal funds.

Then there are the growing immigrant populations, and limited English proficient women, who require ESL programs to make any progress towards educational and economic equity.

HOW TO PROVIDE BASIC ACADEMIC SKILLS:

For many years, the Career and Life Counseling Center referred out for Adult Basic Skills, GED Preparation, and ESL programs. However, this method proved inadequate for many reasons. Consequently, the Center applied for a Basic Skills grant from the Department of Adult Education, and is currently teaching these courses on-site at our campus. The advantages to this cannot be overstressed. It allows us to customize programs for our clients; provides flexibility in accessing and scheduling clients for Basic Skills classes ; and enables us to provide support services/counseling in conjunction with remedial education.

A WORD ON REMEDIATION:

Even with high school diplomas, we have found that many displaced homemakers and single parents have weak academic backgrounds in the most critical areas of reading and math.

Our reading and math remediation classes are critical in recruiting women, and for preparing them for vocational training. This is particularly vital for encouraging women to enter the non-traditional technical areas.

READING/WRITING AND MATH REMEDIATION CLASSES:

Remediation classes run 10-20 hours in length and feature individualized and group instruction. These classes help to build the skill levels of women considering training.

MATH ANXIETY WORKSHOP:

Because of women's well-documented fear of math, and their, in general, low aptitude testing in this area, the Center has found math anxiety workshops to be effective for encouraging career exploration and preparation in non-traditional employment areas. Even a three hour introduction helps to free women from destructive anxiety. Better still is a 6-9 hour group, followed by a math remediation class.

Women and minorities learn math best in context.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Center's location at a specialized vocational technical school provides a most vital program component. For the vast majority of economically disadvantaged women and special populations, quality vocational training is the most viable route to economic well-being.

The Center's unique partnership with Bergen Tech allows it to serve as an ideal model for vocational training institutions which need to modify traditional curricula in order to more effectively recruit, train, and job place special populations such as women and minorities. In addition to seven full-time, adult vocational training programs, and approximately eighteen vocational training programs which mix adults with secondary students, the Career and Life Counseling Center has been privileged to develop two special training programs which are models for special populations:

WOMEN WORKING TECHNICAL

The Center's showcase non-traditional training program for women, Women Working Technical (WWT), commands a track record of successful vocational training leading to non-traditional employment in electronics, mechanical-related fields, and electrical careers. To adapt to women's financial and life pressures (many women cannot afford the luxury of long-term training), WWT offers a 600 hour, or five month full-time training program. This relatively short-term occupational program nonetheless boasts long-term success: WWT during its ten year history claims a 90% job placement rate, a figure all the more impressive given that approximately 55% of its graduates are women formerly on public assistance.

The effectiveness of Women Working Technical is directly related to its strategic program elements. The program is firmly grounded in understanding the barriers which women experience, preventing them from choosing or succeeding in non-traditional jobs; in understanding and addressing the educational, life, and occupational needs which women distinctly bring to the employment and training arena; and, finally, in a curriculum which **integrates** academic, counseling, and support service components critical to women's success in particularly challenging areas. Women Working Technical's unique program components are:

Customized Assessment
Academic skills built into the curriculum
Life Skills and Employment Readiness integrated into the curriculum
An all women's context
Industry Intensive Advisory Council
Support Services for childcare, transportation, and tuition

INTEGRATED OFFICE SYSTEMS

Integrated Office Systems (3-10 months): for women who choose to take the route of a more traditional, lucrative employment field. This vocational training program was designed by the Center is to provide high-tech office skills and thereby to tap the excellent job market in the corporate job market of Northern New Jersey and New York City.

Program length and area of specialization vary. Depending upon the financial restrictions of a displaced homemaker, her skill level, and the other pressures and limitations impacting upon her ability to benefit from vocational training, this program can upgrade skills in as short a time as 3 months, and/or result in for a variety of specializations which include, Clerk Typist/ Receptionist for low-functioning clients; **WordProcessing Specialist; Computerized Accounting;** and **Desktop Publishing Specialists**, for more advanced participants.

Again, the crucial elements are: flexibility, the integration of vocational education, basic skills, counseling, and customization to individual needs, skill levels, and career goals.

MODEL COMPONENTS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Experience and research teach that the following program components logically serve as a model for modifying vocational training for special populations.

An adult only format (to be strongly preferred): While financial restrictions might make it difficult for a vocational training school to provide adult only post-secondary programs, it is a desirable goal to strive towards.

Special populations, and women in particular, find encouragment in the status of an adult program. Women are frequently associated with children, both literally and symbolically, and do better educationally in an environment which communicates respect for their adulthood.

Adults come back to school with a more serious, a more self-directed, and more motivated framework than the majority of secondary school students command. Adults resent the waste of time and energy which secondary students often create in the form of discipline problems.

Life Skills and Employment Readiness integrated into the curriculum: For all of the reasons expressed in the counseling theme section of this manual, and many others, a Life Skills component, required as part of the occupational training and integrated into the class schedule, provides a uniquely effective format for student retention, and ultimately job placement.

While the Center's occupational training programs, as previously described, have a structured life skills course (which includes such topics as study skills, assertive communication skills, and time-management techniques), each class brings its unique issues. The counselor/instructor adapts the curriculum to meet these needs as they arise.

Mary Velardi;
hands-on electrical training.

Employment Readiness programs include career exploration during the occupational training period; résumé writing, interview skills, dressing for success, and sexual harassment workshops and information.

In an ideally structured vocational program for women or special populations counseling and education come together to enhance the educational environment. This leads to maximum retention because it is customized both to specific job skill areas, and to the individual with her special needs and requirements.

Specialized assessment procedures: Assessment is very critical for special populations. Many women will display weak math backgrounds—a finding, for example, which needs to be interpreted with caution. Many special populations will perform poorly on aptitude tests. This does not necessarily indicate a deficit.

For women, assessment entails consideration of a life with very restricted career options, and requires listening with a "third ear" to help her determine if a non-traditional occupational training program might be the best option for her.

In addition, assessment requires attentiveness to life issues which strictly speaking go beyond a narrow career counseling framework. Yet these life issues are as critical to performance and success as educational background, or the attainment of occupational skills.

The integration of basic skills and vocational skills training: Both in response to time restrictions generally affecting special populations, and to enrich the educational experience, it is wise to revise vocational training to integrate academic skills into the job specific training.

Research demonstrates that the learning curve is vastly improved and strengthened when, for example, computation is taught within the framework of the applied job skill.

Research recently completed by the American Association of University Women shows that women in particular learn best when abstraction is replaced with the application of principles and knowledge within a practical context. This preference for the **concrete and contextual** holds true for minorities as well.

Flexible scheduling options: This is particularly important for women with small children who often are affected by the availability of childcare services, and/or who, dependent upon public transportation, need flexibility in the scheduling of their occupational or academic programming. Sensitivity to school schedules, including vacations and school start and ending times, is important to include in vocational planning.

Curricula customized to individual aptitude and need: utilizing modules; competencey-based education; and specialties with varying time and skill requirments: Because of varying time requirements, because of diverse skill backgrounds, because of the range of career goals and objectives which special populations bring to occupational training, it is very important to customize all curricula to meet this unique complex of needs.

A clustering approach to curriculum: It is important for vocational planners to devise a curriculum which offers a range of job skills allowing a student to obtain generic skills applicable to a variety of careers. Women Working Technical, for instance, opens avenues to electronics, electricity, or to mechanics. This approach is especially vital for women in non-traditional fields who are frequently handicapped by weak backgrounds in and/or limited knowledge of many non-traditional areas. Thus, though a woman may ultimately choose electronics as her speciality, a knowledge of basic mechanical principals and operations is crucial to her success, including her ability to converse as a peer with male colleagues, and her degree of adaptability—in an age when adaptability is the key to job security and advancement.

Teacher-Instructed: In this day and age when technology and computers have such a magical aura surrounding them, it is worth stressing that as helpful as computers and state-of-the-art technology are for educational programs and occupational skills training, still it is the power and influence of an instructor which imparts true education. This is all the more so for special populations and for women who require the attention and concern of able teachers, and the responsiveness that human contact alone can provide, to thrive in challenging new endeavors.

It follows also from much that has preceeded that instructors and teachers of special populations need special characteristics which are not necessarily provided in their professional training, or in their mainstream academic experience. The ideal instructor in a program for women and special populations brings together instructional and counseling skills and approaches, and acute sensitivity to the life needs of students with family responsibilities.

SPECIAL PROGRAM CONSIDERATION

Support Services (The Carl Perkins Act): One of the most important features of the Carl Perkins Act is the provision of support services under its mandated single parent and sex equity programs. Childcare heads the list of crucial support services. Without childcare assistance many women who are eligible, and ready for occupational training or job placement, may be impeded from taking this vital step towards economic self-sufficiency.

The issue of child care assistance assumes two forms: financial and availability. Depending on one's locality, the costs of child care are astronomical. In our area, for instance, the average cost for mainstream child care (for children two and one-half or above) is $125 to $150 per week.

For those with infants, (children under two and one-half), and for those teen mothers who have infants and whose prognosis for success is dependent upon completion of education, the problem of infant care availability and cost are of paramount importance. In Bergen County the average cost of infant care is $150 and $200 per week. Only a handful of affordable childcare centers offer infant care, and these have staggering waiting lists.

Transportation stipends are important, again to a degree which depends upon local circumstances. In our area, public transportation is very poor, and without our ability to provide transportation help for clients to car pool or to drive individually to training or jobs, many who are otherwise capable of taking a significant step towards self-sufficiency are haulted from doing so.

Tuition assistance can be critical for special populations. For instance, the Center frequently funds driving lessons for single parents who need a license, but have never learned to drive. Again, in an area deficient in public transportation, a driver's license is a crucial asset for job placement or occupational training.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: EQUITY TRAINING

In our current society, no one is exempt from exposure to sexist and racist attitudes and values. Counselors, teachers, and administrators are not likely to have been educated within their colleges or universities to the subtleties and pervasiveness of gender bias, negative class stereotypes, or racist attitudes.

Despite the growth of Women and Black Studies Programs in the late 60's and early 70's, and despite the ample research and documentation indicating the exclusion of the lives and viewpoints of women and minorities, from mainstream academics, there nonetheless persists widespread bias in the form of exclusion, and derogatory attitudes.

In spite of conscious intention and well-meaning goals, the reality is that most people have absorbed sexist and racist ideology and, again, not withstanding good intentions, these attitudes and biases are likely to seep out in many conscious and unconscious, verbal and nonverbal, attitudinal and behavioral practices.

At this point in time there are many professionals in the field of equity who are available to provide in-service training. This is necessary for all levels of school personnel if a climate of equity is to be created, if curricula are to, both in content and in methodologies, address the issues, the strengths, and the perspectives which special populations bring to the their educational environments.

Vocational programs and guidance services need to place more emphasis on redressing issues of sex-bias and equity, comparable pay and discrimination in the workplace, and the problems of multiple wage-earner families (*The Unfinished Agenda*, 1989).

THE CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND APPLIED TECHNOLOGY ACT (1990)

Recently at a national conference of women's employment/education leaders, the room was polled for funding sources. The range was not large, perhaps ten at most. Some foundations, several small grants from corporations, a few from industry, a handful from the United Way and JTPA—and the lion's share from the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act.

This graphically illustrated the significance of this legislation, the primary funding vehicle, the most forceful mandate, and a clear directive for initiatives to improve the employment status, and to link quality education and vocational training for the advancement of girls and disadvantaged women.

BACKGROUND

The current role of vocational education is pivotal. There is a strong historic connection between vocational training and the economic foundation.

The early 1900's, was, like our own, a period of economic transition. There was widespread concern that the U.S. take special measures to promote economic growth, and sharp awareness of the need for a higher skilled workforce. Labor (the AFL-CIO) advocated government involvement in occupational training.

These forces acted together to create the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, and with that, the government provided funding for occupational skills training in the areas of agriculture, the trades, industry, and home economics.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: GIRLS' TRADE SCHOOLS

For fifty years and more this remained the mandate of vocational education. In fulfilling this mission, vocational education reflected and responded to social, familial, and occupational patterns which shaped female participation.

Between 1900 and 1940, only 20-29% of the workforce were female; the majority of these working women were in low-level health, education, child-rearing, and clerical fields. A large number of the female population was married.

Correspondingly, vocational education offered virtually no wage earning skills training for females. Girls went into home economics courses to prepare them as mothers and wives. Indeed, it was only in 1963 that vocational education officially introduced business education training, a major route to wage earnings for girls and women.

CHANGING TIMES: TOWARDS EQUITY

With the early 60's a new direction in vocational education emerged. Spurred by the Civil Rights and Women's Movements, the Vocational Education Act of 1963, for the first time, expressed a distinct concern for the education and training of disadvantaged populations, the handicapped, the economically disadvantaged, and adults with limited English proficiency. The Act also recognized the need for activities to eliminate sex discrimination.

Yet real change was slow. In fact it was only with the passage of 1972 Title IX legislation forbidding discrimination in federally funded educational programs (*and actually only with the implementation of the regulations of this legislation;* 1975) that change was substantially catalyzed. Before 1972 it was permissible to exclude girls from occupational training programs in vocational education. The vast majority of girls entered either home economics, cosmetology, or clerical programs at their "girls' trade school."

However in the late 70's and early 80's a few equity programs and displaced homemaker programs began to arise supported by the new mandate of vocational education.

A MAJOR NEW DIRECTION

The milestone for girls and women came about with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524).* This Act coincided with women's growth in the labor market; with the feminization of poverty; with increasing numbers of single parent households; and with widespread criticism of discrimination, pay inequity, and occupational segregation.

All these concerns are addressed in this landmark act, notable for the strength of its commitment to equity issues. Amongst its nine stated purposes, we find concern with *"women entering non-traditional occupations," "individuals who are single parents or homemakers,"* and to *"reduce the limiting effects of sex role stereotyping on occupations, job skills, levels of competency, and careers."*

Most significant, the Act created set-asides, mandating and targeting funding for programs for single parents and displaced homemakers, and for sex equity programs. States were required to use a significant portion of their basic grants: Eight point five percent (8.5%) targeted to programs serving single parents and displaced homemakers; three percent (3%), for equity programs to eliminate sex bias, and to counteract sex role stereotyping in vocational education and training.

SIGNIFICANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND EQUITY

Public vocational education is the largest training system in the United States. There are over fifteen million people enrolled in vocational education, 60% in secondary schools, the remainder in postsecondary. Females are over 50% of its overall population.

Clearly, this is the major vehicle preparing youth and adults for the work world. Yet numbers alone do not comprise its significance. Rather the fact that vocational education's constituency is primarily the non-professional majority, the men and women who comprise the backbone of our economy, the 82% of working women, — all of this makes vocational education our particular focus.

Second, vocational education trains in fundamental areas of our economy. These include the trades, major industry and business, agriculture, and, of increasing importance, many of the technical fields in the new emerging economy.

Because its reach is so broad, and because it addresses the majority of working people, vocational education is a potential arena for far-reaching change. This is particularly true for women, and, more specifically, for the challenge of encouraging and enabling women to enter non-traditional employment/training areas. After all, vocational education commands the resources, the instructors, the equipment and shop environments, the ties with unions and industry, and the access to population which, all coming together, could provide leadership in effecting positive change in these critical areas.

SPECIAL BENEFITS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Making changes in vocational education would reverberate throughout the economic and social world. The basis for this change is inherent within the traditions and particular approaches of vocational education at its best. It is a format particularly effective for special populations, women and minorities, and those whose preference is not theoretical and academic. It is particularly important for those economically disadvantaged women, single parents and displaced homemakers, and women on public assistance, who lack the economic resources, and perhaps the academic orientation, to pursue college as a route to economic independence.

If, as the research indicates, it is the non-professional backbone of our country which needs radical adjustment, then it is the vocational education system to which we must look. The "look" however must be critical, and innovative. Educators need to build upon and reconstruct to meet the times, the core strengths of vocational training:

* Carl D. Perkins had been a Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee and in his thirty-five years as a congressman had become know for his legislative support for vocational education, job training, and educational programs for the disadvantaged.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Short-Term Training for Marketable Skills: Vocational training can range from 3 months to 2 years, with the average somewhere around 10 months. The critical issue is that within this relatively short period of time, the emphasis is upon imparting marketable skills leading to a livable family wage.

Hands-On Approach: Again, while academics must not be neglected, the traditional strength of vocational education has been its hands-on, practical skills-oriented approach to learning. This is a particularly important approach for encouraging and enabling women to enter non-traditional areas because it offsets the socialization forces which have prevented women from obtaining the "feel" for and the practical experience of tools and mechanical/technical hands-on, applications and operations.

Responsiveness to Diverse Learning Styles:
Vocational education avoids the too exclusive visual and literary approaches of mainstream academics, providing a broader range of educational approaches.

Cooperation and Team Work: A tour of a vocational school will certainly discover a typical tableau: a group of students gathered around an electrical problem, under a chassis, trying together to "figure it out."

Cooperative Education: The opportunity to work on an employer's site, the integration of training and on-the-job experience is a vital component in vocational education of the highest calibre.

The Employment Partnership: It is one of the historical strengths of vocational education to maintain a close relationship with business and industry. This effects a smoother and more direct transfer of education into the world of work, and it is this transition which is critical to single parents, displaced homemakers, and other special populations in need of economic interventions.

Non-Traditional Opportunities: The potential for impacting on the participation rates of women in trade and technical fields is great within the vocational education framework.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS TOWARDS EQUITY

1917 Smith Hughes Act

1963 - Vocational Education Act shifts focus to target special populations, and mentions elimination of sex discrimination.

Vocational Education Amendment of 1976 authorizes full-time sex equity coordinator, and charges her to oversee equity activities throughout their state.

1984 The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act establishes significant funding for programs to better serve girls and women. This mandate includes support services for child care; and funding for non-traditional projects.

1963	Equal Pay Act	
1964	Title VII, The Civil Rights Act prohibits sex discrimination by employers in training, O.J.T., and apprenticeship. Amended 1972 to include employment.	"Sex" first added as a joke. EEOC created
1964	Title VII amended.	
1971	Executive Order 11246- prohibits sex discrimination by employers with federal contracts above $50,000.	
1972	Title IX forbids discrimination in any federal funded education program.	
1974	Women's Educational Equity Act.	
1976	Title II of Education Amendments (P.L. 94-482) requires states to eliminate sex-bias throughout vocational education.	
1977	N.J. Equality in Education Programs.	

1990 (till 1996) The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act:

- Retains funding set-asides at 10.5% (3.5 % for sex equity, 7% for single parents).
- Strengthens role of Equity Coordinator.
- Mandates a competitive granting process for the funding of single parent and equity program.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (ERA)

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
Introduced 1926. Still unpassed

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

PHILOSOPHY

Policy and policymakers exert a powerful influence on the lives of girls and women. Policy provides two vital resources, — funding, and direction for using the funding. Policy can be sound or unsound, and anywhere in-between. Policy can be a wise investment; and policy can be a tragic misuse of public resources.

The basic ingredient of sound policy for human development is the attitude of the policymaker. A positive attitude:

- Views and approaches human beings in a constructive and respectful manner.
- Demonstrates an appreciation and comprehension of the complexity of human beings.
- Acknowledges that holistic, non-mechanistic approaches truly facilitate growth in human beings.

The resulting policy is then guided by a desire to promote the potential of human beings, and to respect their innate rights and unique qualities.

A negative approach blames the special population—women and minorities—for their deficiencies, for their character flaws, or for their fault in being poor. This negativity is apparent in the majority of welfare reform approaches, and it is reflected in popular misconceptions and stereotypes about women on public assistance. Policy formulated as a result of negative attitudes demeans, blames, distorts, punishes, and inhibits human growth and development. Such policy can only fail in its ostensible helping goals.

Policy also needs to be guided by emphasis on partnership, on coordination of services, and on cooperation for the good of the client. In order to bring this about proactive strategies must be implemented to offset those conditions which create turf systems, and negative competition amongst agencies.

Policy needs to be firmly rooted in a compassionate and intelligent understanding of special populations. It needs also to be informed with the experiences gained from persons and programs who have worked with, and effectively served, women and minorities.

The topdown model of policy creation is a disaster. When those "on top" do not consult the community, they can only create, despite their best intentions, programs which are incompetent, and at worst, bumbling failures.

SOME SPECIFICS

COUNSELING/EDUCATION:

The matrix of all programs and resources committed to helping single parents, displaced homemakers, teens, and other populations must be counseling. Counseling includes personal counseling, life skills groups, and vocational and career counseling. Counseling must be extricated from the general "support service" category, and designated as a separate, fundable activity. All of the below listed systems would be far more successful if they integrated and financed substantial counseling services within occupational training.

THE CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL AND APPLIED TECHNOLOGY ACT:

The new Carl Perkins Applied Technology Act addresses the economic shift from an industrial base to a technologically innovative economy. The name of the Act heralds this shift in focus. This recently reauthorized Carl Perkins legislation also retains funding set-asides for women and disadvantaged groups, as well as continues to acknowledge and target sex-equity issues in education.

The coincidence of these two major components, the shift to technology and the focus on special populations, is neither fortuitous, nor unstrategic. Rather it brings together the two facets of the major economic challenge which this manual has addressed. How it will be implemented is now the critical issue. If vocational training is to live up to its promise as a vehicle for economic opportunity, and economic health for our nation, then the focus on disadvantaged populations, particularly women and minorities, who comprise the majority of the labor market, and the educational demands of a technology-based economy must be strategically posed, addressed, and delivered with the input of equity leaders and professionals.

Equity in education does not just happen. It is in fact a term for a multidisciplinary endeavor, infused with feminist and progressive understandings of history, and reflective of the integration of psychology, sociology, education and communication's theory and practice. Like any professional endeavor, equity personnel must be trained and experienced.

This recognition bears directly on the administrative organization of the new legislation. Specifically, a Sex Equity Coordinator is appointed to oversee the set-asides, and this staff person is allowed to issue competitive grants for the attainment of single parent program goals, and sex equity objectives.

The first cardinal recommendation is that the Sex Equity Coordinator needs to be appointed in accord with criteria which respects the special educational and counseling needs of women, and, especially, economically disadvantaged women.

A representative body such as the National Council on Sex Equity and/or the National Womens' Studies Association could be tapped to develop statewide, federal criteria for the important position of Sex Equity Coordinator.

The Sex Equity Coordinator, then, must be given, legislatively, the authority to enforce and to encourage equity actions throughout the vocational education system.

Equity approaches must be a required component of all categories of vocational education funding. The equity and single parent set-asides are critical to maintain as foci and to reserve undiluted monies for this population and effort. However, it is also important that equity and affirmative action not be marginalized to the set-asides. Rather the legislation should mandate, and monitor, the attainment of equity goals for secondary school students through guidance, through consumer education, through tech prep and any other program which could benefit from the enhancement of equity approaches.

Efforts must be promoted to develop CBO and Vocational Education Partnerships. Community-based organizations often have both access to, and experience with, special populations. Vocational training needs to be enriched and developed so as to provide for the flexible educational needs of special populations; to provide training leading to marketable family wages; and to actively promote, cultivate, and bring to fruition efforts to overcome occupational segregation.

The legislation should provide funding, and other forms of support, to promote the establishment of infant day care centers within vocational educational institutions; and for the utilization of educationally based day care centers to provide support for teen parents and single parents to gain marketable skills leading to self-sufficiency.

JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT (JTPA)

This, the major leverage for funding training opportunities for the employment and training needs of our country, must be modified to waive performance standards in favor of a system of incentives accessing single parents, displaced homemakers, and teens into livable wage training including systematic and documented efforts toward placement in non-traditional occupations.

The legislation must promote the partnership of JTPA with Carl Perkins programs as a major method for responsibly utilizing limited public resources. Local PIC'S must be accountable for forging partnerships with public vocational training, and for documenting equity efforts and outcomes, with specific data on training outcomes by gender.

JTPA funding and program components must include counseling and life skills components integrated with vocational training.

JTPA must be monitored, and held accountable for, gender bias in the delivery of employment and training resources and programs.

WELFARE REFORM (JOBS, et. al.)

All welfare reform programs (at the present the model is JOBS) whose goal is to transition women on public assistance into self-sufficient wage earners, must incorporate the following program foundations. Women on public assistance require:

MENU FOR SUCCESS

Counseling (Personal, Life Skills, Career)
Quality Vocational Training
Academic and Career Education
Child Care Assistance
Health Care Benefits

Without such a comprehensive menu, monies invested in welfare reform will primarily fail. Contrarily, welfare reform efforts driven by an understanding, and a commitment to this comprehensive range of services, will succeed in the mission to make tax-dependent individuals into family breadwinners.

Finally, the current emphasis on using case managers from within the Board of Social Services or other established welfare system agencies is counter-productive to welfare reform.

The federal government should mandate a competitive grant process actively seeking educators and counselors with an advocacy perspective, and experience transitioning women on public assistance into gainful employment.

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PROFILES OF TRANSFORMATION

Appreciation for the Spirit of Cooperation, the Practice of Partnership:

All meaningful endeavors are always collaborative efforts. It takes many people to create positive change.

For the ten years of its operation, the Career & Life Counseling Center at Bergen Tech has benefited from support of many groups and individuals.

These organizations and persons share concern for the uniqueness and value of all persons, and practice that caring attitude with an investment of time, energy, resources, information—in short, with an extension of self to others.

The staff of the Career & Life Counseling Center dedicates this manual to our supporters, colleagues, and friends:

Dr. John Grieco, Superintendent of Bergen County Technical School District

The Bergen County Board of Vocational Education

Paul Calocino
Richard Norman
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